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Ut pictura amor

*The Reflexive Imagery of Love in Artistic Theory
and Practice, 1500–1700*

Edited by

Walter S. Melion

Joanna Woodall

Michael Zell

Emory University, Lovis Corinth Colloquium IV



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Essays Commemorating the 4th Centenary of the Initial Encounter of St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane Frances de Chantal (2007), *Joseph of Nazareth Through the Centuries* (2011), and *Encountering Anew the Familiar: The "Introduction to the Devout Life" at 400 Years* (2012), among others.

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Introduction: Picturing Love and Artifice

Walter S. Melion, Joanna Woodall, and Michael Zell

The articles in this volume are reworked versions of papers given at the fifth Lovis Corinth Colloquium “*Ut pictura amor*: The Reflexive Imagery of Love in Artistic Theory and Practice, 1500–1700”, held at Emory University between October 29th and 31st, 2015. The participants examined prints, drawings, paintings, and sculpture that concurrently exemplify the themes of lovemaking and image-making. The term ‘reflexive’ is here used to refer to images that invite reflection not only on their form, function, and meaning, but also on their genesis and mode of production. Early modern artists often fashioned reflexive images and effigies of this kind, that appraise love by exploring the lineaments of the pictorial or sculptural image, and complementarily, appraise the pictorial or sculptural image by exploring the nature of love. Hence the epigraph on which the colloquium and now this volume turn—*ut pictura amor*—‘as is a picture, so is love’.

Written in 1435 and first published in 1540, Leon Battista Alberti’s treatise *De pictura* (*On Painting*) codified the notion that painting, like love, operates by means of affective images that make absent persons intensely present to consciousness. Painting, states Alberti in Book 2, ‘possesses a truly divine power in that not only does it make the absent present (as they say of friendship), but it also represents the dead to the living many centuries later, so that they are recognized by spectators with pleasure and deep admiration for the artist.’¹ In restoring the image of whomever we have loved and lost to time, or prompting us to delight in the presence of persons not previously known, or standing proxy for friends separated from us by space, the painted portrait nourishes, refreshes, or reconstitutes various kinds and degrees of loving affection, and causes the beholder firmly to believe that his love is indeed reciprocated. If painting is an instrument of love, love is the currency of painting, for *pictura*, thus conceived, serves to represent love as a value mutually given and received: the circulation of the image signifies the transit of affective value amongst the image’s loving beholders—the community of humanist friends, for example. For Alberti, the pleasure of fellowship is virtually indistinguishable from the pleasure of viewing lifelike paintings, just as admiration for the person portrayed elides into admiration for the painter of the portrait. Indeed, his

¹ Alberti L.B., *On Painting and On Sculpture: The Latin Texts of De Pictura and De Statua*, ed.—trans. C. Grayson (London: 1972) 61.

assertion of painting's 'truly divine power' opens Book 2, in which he urges the reader to consider what painting is, the parts of which it consists, the mimetic ends those parts may best be made to serve, and the nature of pictorial circumscription, composition, and reception of light.² Implicit in his account is the far-reaching assumption that the discourse of love licenses the theory of painting, and conversely, that the practice of painting, if properly parsed and understood, can be seen to fuel, be fuelled by, and shed light on the processes of love.

The analogy between *amor* and *pictura* was further propagated within the courtly culture of love: Isabella d'Este, for instance, and her acolytes construed *natura* and *eros* as forms of knowledge analogous to (indeed translatable into) the mimetic and seductive properties of painting and sculpture. Within the poetic and scholarly precincts of her *studiolo*, the power of human artifice was closely compared to the power of love, for both love and artifice inspire and are inspired by desire. Amongst her most treasured possessions was an antique *Sleeping Cupid*, probably sculpted by Michelangelo but thought to be the Praxitelean effigy highly praised by Pliny and Cicero: in poems addressed to the statue and, implicitly, to Isabella, its material properties become indistinguishable from the physical qualities of Cupid; just as marble is construed as flesh (and flesh as marble), so too, the statue's seductive hold on the viewer translates into the erotic power of the god himself. Such poems derive from the *Palatine Anthology*, much read at the Mantuan court, and in particular, as Stephen Campbell has shown, from the epigram by Antipater, wherein the power of the Cnidian Venus to enkindle flames of love, bringing even inanimate stone to erotic life, is compared to the greater power of the Praxitelean Cupid who sets even 'cold adamant' aflame.³ Another Palatine epigram appreciates the *Sleeping Cupid* as the embodiment of Praxiteles's passion for the courtesan Phryne: sculpted to body forth his love, the statue was gifted to Phryne, who then offered it to Venus, in recognition of love's insuperable dominion. As the epigrammatist puts it: 'Praxiteles, who stooped his proud neck for my sandals to tread on, wrought me with his captive hands. For, working me in bronze, he gave me, that very love that was given within him, to Phryne, an offering of friendship. But she again brought it to give to Love; for it is lawful for lovers to bring Love himself as a gift to Love'.⁴ On this account, love impels the sculptor to fashion love's image: artifice issues from and proves symptomatic of Eros, even while portraying him.

2 Ibid. 67.

3 Campbell S., *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* (New Haven – London: 2004) 96–97.

4 Paton W.R. (ed. – trans.), *Greek Anthology*, 5 vols. (Cambridge – London: 1958), Book xvi, no. 203, in v 279; quoted in Campbell, *Cabinet of Eros* 97.



FIGURE 0.1 Maarten van Heemskerck, *Saint Luke Paints the Virgin and Child*, 1532. Oil on panel, 168 × 235 cm. Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem.

In the early and mid-sixteenth century, the poetic conventions of *petrarchismo* became linked with the criteria of pictorial beauty, to such an extent that the portrayal of beautiful women was appreciated as a synecdoche for the beauty and desirability of painting itself. The conditions of affective viewing that define the poetic subject's relation to an absent beloved were seen likewise to define the relation between the viewer and the pictorial image. One of the earliest northern pictures to apply Petrarchist criteria of physical beauty to a religious subject is Maarten van Heemskerck's *Saint Luke Paints the Virgin and Child* of 1532 [Fig. 0.1]. The Virgin's features recall those codified in Italian treatises on female beauty, according to poetic models such as Petrarch's sonnets and Boccaccio's *Teseida*: gleaming ivory-white brow and cheeks, brightly dark eyes, perfectly arched silken dark eyebrows, pointed nose, swelling vermillion lips upturned in a modest smile, long tapering fingers, etc.⁵ Lit by the fiery

5 On these and other exemplary features of Petrarchist beauty, see Cropper E., "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style", *Art Bulletin* 58 (1976) 374–394, esp. 383–384, 387.

light of an angelic torch, Mary's beauty elicits from Luke a love as intense, and ultimately chaste, as that experienced by Petrarch for Laura. The stony effigy of a satyr atop the evangelist's easel provides a mere prop for his panel, suggesting that carnal desire has been overmastered by the divinely inspired painter; subservient to the principle of divine love, the inert satyr-easel functions as a monochrome backdrop to the lifelike effigy being fashioned by Luke in rosy and ivory-white flesh tints. Held aloft by Mary, the infant Jesus extends his left arm and hand in a commanding gesture that appears to activate Luke's raised right arm and hand, which are counterpoised to the Lord's.

Beside Luke stands a male figure whose gestures precisely mirror those of Christ: his right hand nearly touches the painter's brush, seeming almost to guide it; he raises his left arm heavenward, in imitation of Christ's right. This figure, whom Heemskerck's biographer Karel van Mander designated a 'Poeet', wears the ivy wreath signifying poetic inspiration, and may thus be identified as the mirror-image of Christ who is the true source of divine inspiration, whereas the Poet stands for the most elevated form of human invention.⁶ Inspired by the Virgin's supernal beauty, the painter sits halfway between Jesus and the 'Poeet', propelled by love jointly to engage in the *grazia* of poësis and the grace of divinely inspired painting. Luke's efforts as painter imitate, as far as is humanly possible, the action of divine image-making made manifest by the mystery of the Incarnation, and epitomized by the infant Jesus whom Mary displays above the crystalline orb of the world, poised as *Salvator Mundi*. In Heemskerck's painting, then, the Petrarchist discourse of love combines with an incarnational discourse of divine love; together, these complementary discourses license the painting's argument that Luke, in painting a token of his love of Mary and Jesus, strives to engender love for the Virgin and Child in the viewer-votary. A third discourse of love subtends this painting about the painting of a beloved icon. The trompe-l'oeil cartellino at lower left, affixed to the podium on which Mary and Jesus sit, commemorates the gift of this panel to Heemskerck's fellow painters in the Haarlem Guild of Saint Luke:

This painting was given in memory
Of Maarten van Heemskerck, who devised
And executed it in honour of Saint Luke,
Mindful of his fellow guild brothers.
Let us thank him day and night
For his generous gift here exhibited.

6 Mander Karel van, *Het Schilder-Boeck* (Haarlem, Paschier van Wesbusch: 1604), fol. 245 recto.

Thus shall we pray with all our might
That God's grace go with him.⁷

The picture thus gives voice to its status as picture and, in the same breath, acknowledges the painter's love of Saint Luke and his guild brothers, as the affective matrix whence it came forth. We might put this as follows: *Saint Luke Paints the Virgin and Child* is meta-discursive; painted for fellow painters, it is a picture about picture-making, that attests Heemskerck's patronal and fraternal love, and designates them as its dual source.

Image theory and the doctrine of love also combined in the emblem tradition, as the famous emblem books of Otto van Veen, enshrining the themes of profane and sacred love, amply testify.⁸ Van Veen observes frequently that love, since it operates in and through images, is an essentially pictorial enterprise. Consequently, if one is to understand love, love's images must be investigated, and questions posed about how and why they transmit, sustain, or inflame desire. Emblem 24 of the *Amorum emblemata figuris aeneis incisa* (*Emblems of [Profane] Love Engraved in Copper*) (Antwerp, Otto Vaenius: 1608), to cite one example, centers on an image of Amor holding up the drawing of a heart transfixed by two arrows [Fig. 0.2]. This is the lover's wounded heart, avers the Latin quatrain, with which Amor seeks to stir the beloved's affections; or alternatively, it is the beloved's wounded heart, which Amor compels her to recognize:

For a [visual] effect imports more in love than the voice.
Ineffectual words fly away, and often lovers are beguiled by them,
Whereas Love is duly tried and tested by the thing itself.

7 "Tot een memorie es dese taeffelt gegeven.

Van Mertin Heemskerck diet heeft gewracht.

Ter eeren sinte Lucae heeft hy bedreven.

Ons gemeen gesellen heeft hy mede bedacht.

Wij mogen hem dancken by dage by nacht.

Van zyn milde gifte die hier staet present.

Dus willen wy bidden mit al ons macht.

Dat goids gratie hem wil zyn omtrent'.

On *Saint Lucas Paints the Virgin and Child*, see Harrison J.C., "Maarten van Heemskerck, *De heilige Lucas schildert de Madonna*, 1532", in Filedt Kok J.P. – Halsema-Kubes W. – Kloek W.Th. (eds.), *Kunst voor de beeldenstorm. Noordnederlandse kunst 1525–1580* [exh. cat., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam] (The Hague: 1986) 191–192.

8 Melion W.S., "Venus/Venius: On the Artistic Identity of Otto Vaenius and his Doctrine of the Image", in McKeown S. (ed.), *Otto Vaenius and his Emblem Books*, Glasgow Emblem Studies 15 (Glasgow: 2012) 1–53.



FIGURE 0.2 Cornelis Boel after Otto van Veen, Emblem 24: 'Quid sentiam ostendere malim quam loqui', in Otto van Veen, *Amorum emblemata, figuris aeneis incisa* (Antwerp, Otto van Veen: 1608) 46. Engraving, 113 × 147 mm.

Whoever's heart this is, it confirms that love is best discovered visually not verbally, as the emblem's Senecan motto declares: 'What may be discerned by sense, I prefer to show, not to speak'.⁹ In turn, the *pictura* makes clear that Love reveals himself or, alternatively, that love is best adduced and cultivated, by reference to a diagnostic pictorial image of the lovelorn heart. Additional quatrains in various vernacular languages, embroider upon these common-places. The English text insists that images best disclose a lover's intentions: 'For speech may please the eare, and not disclose the mynd. / But fraudlesse is the love whereas the harte is known'.¹⁰ The Dutch text of Emblem 42, closely

⁹ Vaenius Otto, *Amorum emblemata, figuris aeneis incisa* (Antwerp, Otto Vaenius: 1608) 46.

¹⁰ Ibid.

allied to Emblem 24, affirms that every form of art issues from love, for desire fosters the impulse to devise and fashion: 'Cupid gave rise to every noble art. / Love makes man apt to every kind of thing'.¹¹ This emblem's motto, 'Love teaches novel arts', underscores the relation between *amor* and *artes* that likewise informs Emblem 24's argument that love propagates and is propagated by images.¹² Here and elsewhere in the *Amorum emblemata*, picturing love enables both lover and beloved more fully to experience love, parse its causes and effects, and reciprocate love given or received.

Imitative doctrine pervades the emblem books of Van Veen and his contemporaries, on whose amorous scenes of daily life (often featuring Amor in the role of burgher), as has persuasively been argued, the canon of Dutch genre painting, comprising scenes of trade, commerce, festivity, courtship, and domesticity, seems largely to have been based.¹³ This helps to explain why the theme of love underlies so many of the descriptive episodes that typify this pictorial genus, and further, why the attention they direct to issues of manufacture, not least to how they have been painted, goes hand in hand with the characterization of love, its devices and stratagems, as epitomes of artifice. Precisely because the imagery of love is bound up with the topic of pictorial artifice, this imagery, more often than not, functions reflexively to make the beholder mindful of the format and function, manner and meaning of the pictorial or sculptural image qua image he is beholding.

In the religious domain, the nexus between *charitas* and *pictura* usually substitutes for that between *amor* and *pictura*. One of the more explicit accounts of *charitas* as a catalyst of pictorial artifice occurs in that most important of Jesuit meditative treatises, Jerónimo Nadal, S.J.'s *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* (*Annotations and Meditations on the [Liturgical] Gospels*) (Antwerp, Martinus Nutius: 1595, *editio princeps*; Antwerp, Officina Plantiniana apud Ioannem Moretum, 1607, *editio ultima*).¹⁴ Composed by

11 Ibid. 82: 'Van alle consten eel Cupido d'oorsaek vond. De Liefde maeckt den mensch bequaem tot alle dinghen'.

12 Ibid.: 'Ingeniosus Amor varias nos edocet artes; / Rebus nosque habiles omnibus ille facit'.

13 Woodall J., 'Love is in the Air—*Amor* as Motivation and Message in Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Painting,' *Art History* 19 (1996) 208–246.

14 On the *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*, see, amongst other publications, Fabre P.-A., *Ignace de Loyola: le lieu de l'image* (Paris: 1992) 162–239, 263–295; Dekoninck R., 'Ad imaginem': *status, fonctions et usage de l'image dans la littérature spirituelle jésuite du XVII^e siècle*, *Travaux du Grand Siècle* 26 (Geneva: 2005) 157–370 passim, esp. 234–237, 287–289, 303–305; Münch B.U., *Geteiltes Leid: Die Passion Christi in Bildern und Texten der Konfessionalisierung. Druckgraphik von der Reformation bis zu den jesuitischen Großprojekten um 1600* (Regensburg: 2009) 161–198; and Melion W.S., "'Quis non

Nadal at the behest of Ignatius of Loyola, the treatise consists of 153 folio-size Gospel images, primarily engraved by Hieronymus, Jan, and Antoon II Wierix, after modelli by Bernardino Passeri and Maarten de Vos. Every engraved illustration contains letters—‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’, ‘D’, etc.—that map a temporal and spatial itinerary, and correlate to textual captions, pericopes, and annotations, likewise inscribed with these same letters. Each of the 153 chapters ends in a meditation that follows the topical order of the preceding captions, pericopes, and annotations, absent the inserted letters. The *Adnotationes et meditationes* takes the reader-viewer through the liturgical calendar, from Advent through Easter, with special emphasis placed on the sequences memorializing the Infancy, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ. The ideal user—a Jesuit scholastic—is taught how to employ evangelical images as nodes of exegetical reflection on the mysteries of salvation promulgated by Jesus in the Gospels. Chapter XXXIX, “The Meal at the House of Simon the Leper”, explicates *Matthew* 26:6–13, *Mark* 14:3–9, and *John* 12:1–8, the pericopes commemorated on the Monday of Holy Week. This chapter attaches to *imago* 84 (unlike the textual chapters, which are organized liturgically and numbered in Roman numerals, the *imagines* follow the sequence of key events from the *vita Christi*, and are numbered chronologically in Arabic numerals) [Fig. 0.3]. The lettered scenes describe: (‘A’) Jericho whence Jesus comes to Bethania; (‘B’) Bethania; (‘C’) the house of Simon the leper; (‘D’) the multitude who came to Bethania, not only to see Jesus, but also Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised; (‘E’) Jesus at table, accompanied by Lazarus; (‘F’) Jewish bystanders, their eyes fixed on Lazarus; (‘G’) Martha ministering to the guests; (‘H’) other attendants; (‘I’) Christ who in spirit meditates his death; (‘K’) the Magdalene anoints the feet of Jesus and wipes them dry with her hair; (‘L’) the Magdalene breaks open an alabastron and anoints Jesus; (‘M’) Judas takes umbrage at this anointing; (‘N’) a demon impels Judas to hasten to the chief priests. The ontological status of scene ‘K’ and its relation to scenes ‘D’, ‘F’, ‘L’, and especially ‘I’ are worthy of note, since this relation directly pertains to our theme ‘ut pictura amor’.

It bears stating, first of all, that the affective context for the events narrated in chapter XXXIX and *imago* 84 is the antithesis between the magnanimity of Christ and his chief followers—the Virgin Mary, the apostles, and Mary, Martha, and Lazarus—and the hatred of the chief priests. Nadal construes *magnanimitas* (‘greatness of soul’) as a selfless expression of love for one’s fellow men. Knowing that his death is close at hand, and that the Paschal

intelliget hoc voluisse Christum’: The Significance of the Redacted Images in Jerónimo Nadal’s *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*”, in Lea J.P. (prep.), *Jerome Nadal, S.J., Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels: Cumulative Index* (Philadelphia: 2014) 1–99.



FIGURE 0.3 Antoon II Wierix after Bernardino Passeri, Meal at the House of Simon the Leper, in *Jerónimo Nadal, Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* (Antwerp, Martinus Nutius: 1595). Engraving, 232 × 146 mm.

meal to be celebrated one week hence will be his last, Jesus nonetheless hastens to embrace his fate, hurrying to Bethania en route to Jerusalem. The clear implication is that he is impelled by charity or, better, *amor proximi* ('love of one's fellow men'), to fulfill his messianic vocation. For their part, his friends and disciples strive to imitate the loving example he sets, as Nadal avows in annotation 'B':

Bethania at the foot of Mount Olivet, from the east, yet facing southward, where Jesus comes to the house of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. See them approaching: Christ, raised aloft assuredly by a certain fortitude of the spirit, precedes the others in journeying forth, hastening toward death; Mary the Virgin mother truly mourns (for Jesus had prophesied to her that he was making his way toward death and the cross) and yet bears her sorrow magnanimously; the others proceed sadly and timorously.¹⁵

The ensuing *meditatio* expands upon this brief description, urging the votary to visualize the contrary motions of the spirit felt by Christ and his disciples:

But on the contrary, if you were to behold the spirit of Christ, of Mary the Virgin mother, of the apostles, of the [holy] women, their cast of mind would appear different. A certain fear and sorrow in the face of the body's impending death had begun to affect Christ, though voluntarily, which he endured by his magnitude of spirit, infinite in extent. The Virgin Mary, truly sorrowing with Christ, undertook this journey magnanimously. Aghast and fearful, the apostles and [holy] women journeyed along in body, step by step, though in spirit they were fleeing; and yet the spirit of Christ sustained them divinely. In sight of these things, the Church consecrates several days before Good Friday to the Passion of Christ.¹⁶

15 Nadal Jerónimo, *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia quae in sacrosancto Missae sacrificio toto anno leguntur: Cum eorundem Evangeliorum concordantia. Editio ultima. In qua Sacer Textus ad emendationem Bibliorum Sixti V. et Clementis VIII. restitutus* (Antwerp, Ex Officina Plantiniana, apud Ioannem Moretum: 1607) 218: 'Bethania ad radicem montis Oliveti ab Oriente, vergens tamen ad Austrum, quo venit Iesus ad domum Mariae, Marthae, & Lazari. Contemplare venientes: Christus quidem excelsa quadam animi fortitudine iter faciens alios praecedit, ad mortem properans: Maria Mater Virgo moerens quidem (praedixerat enim Iesus ad crucem se ire & mortem) magnanimiter tamen morem suffert: alij tristes sunt & timidi'.

16 Ibid. 220: 'Contra vero Christi animum si spectes, si Mariae Virginis Matris, Apostolorum, mulierum, varia occurret affectuum facies. Christum incipiebat mortis propinquae naturalis quidam timor & moeror, voluntarius tamen, movere; quem tamen infinita animi

The concluding remark draws an analogy between Christ's exemplary behaviour and that of the Church: just as he meditates his Passion and death days in advance of these events, rushing to undertake what he in fact fears and dreads, so too, the Church does the same, dwelling on the Passion even on the Monday of Holy Week. The question, then, is how precisely does Jesus meditate the Passion, and to what end?

The answer lies in the captions, annotations, and meditations on scenes 'I, 'Contemplate the spirit of Christ meditating [his] death', and 'K, 'The Magdalene anoints the feet of Christ, and wipes them dry with her hair'.¹⁷ Since the Jews who have flocked to Bethania pay little attention to him, and his followers imitate his actions yet are loath to accept that he must die, Jesus stages for them an allegorical image of his imminent death and burial, making use of visual means to insist that they acknowledge and espouse what must perforce transpire. By couching this proleptic image allegorically, he makes it gentler, more assimilable, causing the Jews to cast their eyes upon him, and at the same time soothing the divided hearts and minds of his mother, friends, and disciples. The visual instrument through which he represents his future sacrifice turns out, surprisingly, to be a person—Mary Magdalene—whom he inspires more intensely to express her love of him by enacting, before the fact, the rites of unction to be performed once he has died. Nadal thus amplifies *Matthew* 26:12 (and also *Mark* 14:8 and *John* 12:7): 'For she in pouring this ointment upon my body, hath done it for my burial'. Nadal declares about Mary that in anointing him, she 'set [his] death and burial before the eyes of all'. And in annotations 'K' and 'L, he emphasizes that Jesus moved her to portray his death and burial not once but twice:

K. Maria, surnamed Magdalena, the very same sister of Martha and Lazarus; who already once before had anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped them dry with her hair, not as now, both the head and feet; whose sins Christ had remitted, and from whom he had two years before cast out seven demons; whence the noble woman attained great glory, for having formerly been impious, she was made a manifest ('insigne', i.e.,

magnitudine sustentabat. Maria Virgo secundum Christum dolenter quidem, magnanimiter tamen hoc iter faciebat. Apostoli vero & mulieres stupebant quidem & timebant, hinc passibus corporis sequebantur iter, illinc animo refugiebant; quos tamen Christi Spiritus fulciebat divinitus. Ob hanc rerum faciem Ecclesia ante Christi crucem aliquot dies eius passioni consecrat'.

17 Ibid., *imago* 71, caption I: 'Christi animum contemplare, mortem meditantis'. And *imago* 71, caption K: 'Magdalena ungit pedes Iesu. Et capillis extergit'.

‘clearly visible’) example of piety and sanctity. Inflamed by love of Christ (‘charitate in Christum’), when she realized that his death and burial were imminent, she wished to celebrate and venerate them with precious ointment. Nor did she now cry, as she had previously at that earlier anointing; rather, full of internal charity, she was wholly seized, ravished by devotion of the spirit. [...]

L. See first how she falls prostrate at Jesus’s feet, anoints them, wipes them dry with her hair; not content with this office, as if rising in devout fervour, she breaks open an alabastom and pours [its contents] upon his head; just as if, with its most precious fragrance, she were refreshing the head and whole body of Christ who was soon to die. Behold her motions of the spirit, her interior anointing of Christ whose feet and head she chiefly blessed. And consider how Christ simultaneously caused the sweetness of interior unction to overflow within her.¹⁸

So the Magdalene’s love, made more intense by the spirit of Christ, prompts her to fashion a living image of his death for the benefit of all people present. Annotation ‘K’ identifies the roundel as phase one of the two-part ritual of anointing completed in scene ‘L’, but it also associates scene ‘K’ with the earlier episode of the Magdalene’s penitence, described in *Luke 7:37–38*: ‘And behold a woman that was in the city, a sinner, when she knew that he sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment. And standing behind at his feet, she began to wash his feet, with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment’.

The status of *imago* 84 is doubly representational, as Nadal further makes clear. First, Mary Magdalene was partly re-enacting what she had earlier

18 Ibid. 219: ‘K. Maria, cognomine Magdalena, eadem soror Marthae & Lazari; quae iam antea unxerat pedes Iesu, & exterserat capillis, non pedes & caput, ut hic: cui Christus peccata multa remiserat, ex qua Daemonia septem eiecerat ante biennium; unde magnam gloriam erat consequuta mulier nobilis, e profana effecta insigne sanctitatis & pietatis exemplum. Haec charitate in Christum accensa, cum sciret proximam eius mortem & sepulturam, eam voluit unctione pretiosa celebrare & adorare. Nunc non plorat, quod alia unctione fecerat; sed plena charitatis internae, tota rapitur & dissolvitur in animi devotionem. [...].

‘L. Aspice ut procumbat ad pedes Iesu primum, ut illos ungat, ut capillis extergat; nec hoc officio contenta, quasi in fervorem devotionis assurgens, effringit alabastrum, & super caput Iesu effundit; ut & caput, & totum Christi corpus cito morituri pretiosissimo odore irriget. Contemplare affectus animi in Magdalena, & eius unguentum interius, quo praecipue pedes & caput Christi ungebat: refundentem simul considera Christum in eam internae unctionis dulcedinem’.

performed as a penitent; whereas then she anointed Christ's feet, she now anoints both his head and feet, doing so in a devoutly celebratory way. This second unction looks forward to the Resurrection, and the joyful promise of salvation, the true fruit of the Lord's Passion and death. This is the sense in which Mary's second office of anointing has the power to console ('nunc non plorat, quod alia unctione fecerat'), a point that Nadal accentuates midway in the *meditatio*, speaking as if in the voice of Christ: 'But instruct us, benign Jesus, in the several mysteries of this Gospel. I wished six days before the festive Paschal meal to commemorate my Last Supper and my Passion, in order that I might represent that sense of the Passion and Last Supper lodged in my spirit; and so that the feelings of sorrow and fear in my mother's spirit and the spirits of my disciples might be alleviated'.¹⁹ Scenes 'I', 'K', and 'L' depict this subsequent unction in a festive key, re-portraying what in scene 'K', alternatively construed as the Lucan episode of unction, occurs abjectly and penitentially. Second, scene 'K', though it follows scene 'I' in the sequence of lettering, actually represents the occasion of anointing that precedes it. Why is this the case? The answer has to do with 'K's status as a scene of re-presentation: annotation 'I', read in conjunction with annotation 'K's allusion to *Luke* 7:37–38, allows indeed invites us to identify it as an image of the Magdalene's first unction that Christ recalls to himself or, more precisely, fashions for the purpose of meditating, and then re-purposes and re-represents, through the Magdalene, whose second unction is performed at his behest, for the benefit of his followers and the Jewish bystanders. This is the image Christ sees *interius* ('internally'), here pictured as a template for the more intricate dual action of anointing, the final stage of which is performed in scene 'L'—which is to say that scene 'L' is the external image that both recalls and completes the internal image pictured in scene 'K'. By the same token, scene 'I' is an external image of Jesus, whereas scene 'K' is internal to him.

This argument can be applied to 'K', even if one associates it with the first stage of the bipartite anointing at Bethania. The reason why 'K' follows 'I', in that case, even though it appears to show the event that Christ subsequently contemplates in 'I', would be that 'K' does not merely illustrate the event per se, but rather, represents the image of this event that Christ visualizes to himself *after* it has already taken place. Scene 'K', in other words, is the image of an image, a point that *imago* 84 stresses by showing it at miniature scale, as an

19 Ibid. 220: 'Sed doce nos, benigne Iesu, mysteria aliquot huius Evangelij. Volui ante sex dies Paschae celebri coena coenam meam ultimam & passionem commemorare, ut qui in animo meo erat passionis sensus & coenae ultimae, eum repraesentarem: & qui in animis discipulorum & Matris erat doloris & timoris sensum lenirem'.

enframed roundel hung from the spandrel between the two arches marking the threshold of Simon the Leper's banquet hall.²⁰ That the roundel repeats *imago* 84 in small, serves to suggest that it is an *imago huius imaginis* ('an image comprised by this [other] image'); the same holds true of its position flush against the surface of the larger *imago* within which, or on the surface of which, it is embedded. In these respects, the ontological status of scene 'K' is consonant with the argument of annotation 'I' that urges us to observe Christ meditating his death and burial, by directing our attention to the Magdalene's first and second unctions. 'K' reveals the visual image Christ deploys as the template for the image performatively staged by Mary Magdalene in 'L': 'See the spirit of Jesus meditating his death and burial. For this reason, he deeply stirs the Magdalene internally, causing her by means of her anointings to represent these things (i.e., his *mortem* and *sepulturam*):'²¹ The *meditatio* supplements annotation 'I' by reminding the votary that the 'contemplation of divine things' ('divinarum rerum contemplatio') arises from devout consideration of mysteries such as the Passion.²² These mysteries may be discerned by spiritually savouring the desires, meditations, and deeds that Jesus, author of these contemplative media, makes discernible to all who show themselves willing and able closely to peruse them.²³ *Imago* 84 and, within it, scene 'K' stand proxy for the form and function of these media that allow us to meditate the Lord's Passion, death, and burial in the manner he himself meditated them. In that the Magdalene's performative image-making issues from her heightened love of Christ ('charitate in Christum accensa'), and his meditative image-making correlates to his sacrificial love of sinful humankind, *imago* 84 and its *imago in imagine*—scene 'K'—qualify as epitomes of the aphorism 'ut pictura amor'.

We have gathered the essays under eight thematic rubrics that distill commonalities of interest and approach shared by the various authors. Section 1,

20 A third possible reading, one which normalizes the temporal relation between 'I' and 'K', would be to claim that 'K' simply represents part one of the two-part unction called forth by the will of Christ, whom scene 'I' designates as the progenitor of 'K' and 'L'. Thus viewed, 'K' could be thought to illustrate the event itself, but also to depict the proleptic image lodged in the will of Christ, on which basis he caused this event to take place.

21 Ibid. 219: 'Iesu animum animadverte, mortem suam meditantis & sepulturam. Propterea permovet interius Magdalenam, ut haec unctionibus repraesentet'.

22 Ibid. 220: '[...] quae ut vitam activam significat, ita etiam operosam meditationem mysteriorum, unde animi levatio oriri solet, & divinarum rerum contemplatio'.

23 Ibid.: 'Haec ut devote percipiatis mysteria, gustus est vobis parandus ex piis desiderijs, & meditationibus, & operibus. Haec frequenter versate animo me auctore, & mecum hanc coenam accipietis'.

“Vision, Imagination, and Erotic Desire”, opens with an essay by Wietse de Boer that explores how shifts in the literary and religious culture of Italy become evident from the ways in which the poetry of lyric sentiment, more specifically love poetry, was glossed in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. De Boer’s case study is a famous sonnet by Giovanni della Casa that dwells on the nature and symptoms of *amor hereos* (‘lovesickness’). Commentaries on this and other poems reveal the extent to which philologists, literary critics, and, perhaps unexpectedly, theologians, in interpreting the condition of *amor hereos* (‘lovesickness’), applied diagnostic terminology—more particularly, a conception of the diseased relation amongst vision, imagination, and reason—jointly borrowed from the medical doctors and from scholastic theologians. Their conception of the imaginative pathology of love (‘*corruptio virtutis imaginativae*’) not only derives from medical discourse, but also from the mimetic doctrine of Torquato Tasso, who avowed in his late commentaries on lyric poetry that *pensiero* (‘the operations of thought’) are mimetic in form and function, and that the image of the beloved lingers, for good or ill, as a *habitus*, a moral disposition.

Ursula Härting’s article is concerned with the little-studied subject of rooms that were devoted to elite bathing, relaxation, and playful socialising, including bathing suites in suburban and rural villas. It is argued that, for both genders, these rooms could be places for potentially health-giving sexual fulfilment, or at least an amorous adventure. A variety of evidence is marshalled, including contemporary treatises such as Francesco di Giorgio Martini’s *Trattati di architettura ingegneria e arte militare* of the early 1480s, which contains a detailed account and lexicon of private bathing complexes, informed by the work of classical authors such as Vitruvius. The article also examines surviving bathhouses and the records of their decoration, for instance the Renaissance suite installed by Pope Clement VII at Castel Sant’Angelo, François I’s magnificent complex in Fontainebleau, the imperial bathhouse at Regensburg, and inventories of Flemish country houses. The latter show a marked preference for erotically charged mythological scenes, especially of lovers, which are conspicuously absent from the inventories of city residences. It is argued that paintings in which Venus and Neptune figured prominently and—with their fellow Gods—in a state of undress, can be associated with bathing complexes. Rendered ‘natural’ and yet eroticised by such images, these were social spaces in which nudity was accepted, even celebrated, and illicit looking was a prevalent theme.

Joshua Mostow’s essay takes us from early modern Europe’s highly developed doctrine of *Ut pictura amor* to what he identifies as its sole point of convergence in the artistic culture of early modern Japan: pornography. Although

a truly comparable theoretical or visual discourse linking love and artistic creativity did not emerge in Japanese art, Mostow examines the overlaps and distinctions between *I modi* (ca. 1527), Marcantonio Raimondi's famous set of engravings after Giulio Romano's drawings depicting sexual positions, with accompanying sonnets by Pietro Aretino, and the erotic picture books of the prolific Hishikawa Moronobu (d. 1694), considered the 'father' of *ukiyo-e*, or 'pictures of the floating world', the demi-monde, primarily of Tokyo's licensed quarter and theatres. Like *I modi*, Moronobu's *ehon*, or 'picture-books', have antecedents in brothel guide-books, lists of sexual positions purportedly derived from classical sources, and portraits of prostitutes arranged serially. By combining these forms of popular culture with a canon of much older love poetry and literary court romances, like the twelfth-century *Tale of Genji* and even earlier *Ise Stories*, which were often illustrated, Moronobu appropriated the aristocracy's cultural capital for a non-elite audience. Yet while both *I modi* and Moronobu's erotic picture books were innovations of early modernity's print culture and increasing literacy rates, Mostow emphasizes revealing differences between the two artistic phenomena and their respective receptions in European and Japanese society. The publication of *I modi* led to its suppression by the Church, whereas Moronobu's erotic picture books caused no such outcry, nor apparently any concern with the explicit depiction of sexually active women, let alone the inclusion of male sodomy, an accepted practice for Japanese adult males. As Mostow points out, Moronobu's work was 'normative', not 'libertine', and his erotic picture books even served a didactic function as manuals for a healthy sex life, the basis of conjugal harmony. But their escape from prohibition or censorship would end in the late nineteenth century, when Japan returned 'to the family nations'.

Dawn Odell examines an engraved pair of Chinese ladies in Athanasius Kircher's *China monumentis [...] illustrata* (Amsterdam, Joannis Janssonius: 1667), showing how they engage with late Ming and early Qing discourses of love (*qing*) and representations of beautiful women (*meiren hua*). Kircher's images are singular in that they purport not only to depict a specific kind of Chinese painting, but also to place the beholder in the subject position of a Chinese viewer encountering a potentially seductive image of female beauty. Poised between the *qing* of romantic sentiment and the *qing* of physical desire, the engravings respond to Chinese woodblock prints that 'sutured' elite traditions of 'beautiful women' painting to popular, often sexually explicit narratives, such as *The Story of the Western Wing*, and combined seemingly poetic calligraphic texts with erotic images of women surrounded by desirable objects—jade, porcelain, fine textiles, etc. Just as these woodblocks utilize the print medium to transplant the *meiren hua* of refined scholar-viewers into

another cultural sphere—popular, commercial, explicitly sexual—so Kircher's prints transplant 'Chinese images' into a European cultural context.

Section 2, "Metamorphic Imagery of Love", contains two essays focusing on the representation of the transformative effects of love. Haohao Lu explores the intertwined sensations of sight and touch upon which the experience of erotic arousal is premised in the mythological subjects painted by Jan Gossaert for patrons such as Philip of Burgundy and Philip of Cleves. These pictures, as she shows, consistently transform sight into a surrogate for touch, thus calling for 'renewed attention to the corporeal implications of sight'. In the *Rovigo Venus* and *Hercules and Deianira*, the spectacle of self-palpation and corporeal entanglement serves to generate an experience of both tactile sensation and empathetic attachment. The shift from visual to tactile operates in tandem with other imagined material changes—of the pictorial into the sculptural, and of painted flesh into flesh-like stone. The circumstances in which these paintings were viewed or, better, staged, enhanced their sensuous properties, further augmenting the effect of erotic agency.

Walter Melion explicates the Ovidian-Virgilian poetics of anthropomorphic image-making, operative in a group of prints and drawings by Hendrick Goltzius that feature humanized faces emerging from various natural things and phenomena. Closely associated with depictions of Venus and Cupid, this curious device, as Melion demonstrates, jointly serves to attest the generative and affective properties of love, and to affirm Goltzius's status as love's chosen instrument. Anthropomorphosis operates differently in Goltzius's *Portrait of Frederick de Vries*, where eros transforms into affection, erotic desire into the mutual longing of a father and son, and the engraver identifies with Ovid's Orphic paradigm of poësis and Virgil's trope of the living tree.

Section 3, "Optics, Aesthetics, and the Visual Poetics of Desire" comprises two essays that consider theories of vision and the materiality of works of art in relation to the poetics of desire in the artistic cultures of early modern Europe and Islam. Kishwar Rizvi examines the nexus between love and image making through the rich theme of the beloved in Persianate literature, focusing on a sumptuously illustrated sixteenth-century Safavid manuscript of Kamal al-din Gazargahi's *Majālīs al-ushshāq* (*Assembly of Lovers*). The manuscript's paintings, she shows, both align with and depart from its central themes of human love and unrequited desire as conduits for truth and divine love itself. Of the book's 30 paintings of *majālīs*, or gatherings, she analyzes a set of images depicting Adam, Joseph (Yosuf), Mohammad, and lastly, the story of the lovers, Layla and Majnun. By attending closely not only to the intricate iconographies of the paintings but also their material properties, Rizvi elucidates how the paintings' visual pleasures compete with the esoteric learning contained in

the *Majālis al-ushshāq*. The artistry and materiality of the book's illustrations thus participate in and complicate its discourse of love, serving, she writes, 'as a form of visual and intellectual distraction' that ultimately 'bring[s] the divine into the realm of human experience'.

Thijs Weststeijn's essay probes the intersection between art theory, poetics, philosophy, and theories of vision in early modern Europe. Art theoretical texts of the period commonly analogize the relationship between the painter and his work to that of the lover to his beloved, and similarly the beholder of a painting as a lover, or in Dutch a 'liefhebber', of art. While it has been well-established that this analogy served a range of artistic and social interests, and that many early modern artists explicitly or allusively engaged it in paintings featuring beautiful women, Weststeijn reconsiders the trope from the perspective of contemporary theories of vision, which conceived of sight as a two-way process between seer and the seen. Whether the flow was understood to take the form of extramission or intromission, the period's understanding of vision, according to Weststeijn, structures the analogy between painting and love as 'a two-way transfer of qualities *from* and *to* the eye'. He examines the impact of this notion of reciprocity between viewer and object in theories of love and art through an exploration of a series of artworks in which the central figure—usually but not exclusively female—turns toward the viewer, or, as he puts it, 'looks back'. Beginning with Caravaggio's *Medusa*, an image that explicitly thematizes this reciprocity, Weststeijn interprets startlingly life-like paintings by Rubens, Salomon de Bray, and Matthias Stom and ultimately Rembrandt's monumental *Blinding of Samson* in relation to this understanding of vision as an interactive process, and of painting as a powerful 'seductress of sight' that exerts its power over painter and beholder alike.

Section 4, "Amorous Desire, Domestic Virtue, and Love's Mirror" is concerned with the visualisation of conjugal love and ways in which love informed the content and character of Dutch genre paintings. Stephanie Dickey's article focuses on two contrasting paintings with the common theme of a dynamic encounter between lovers in which one partner rushes to the aid of the other: Rembrandt's *Portrait of the Shipbuilder Jan Rijcksen and his Wife Griet Jans*, 1633, and Van Dyck's *Cupid and Psyche*, ca. 1639. The pictures are considered with reference to conjugal love, looking beyond erotic desire to what the English theologian John Rogers (1632) described as 'a sanctified affection of the heart, whereby whosoever is indued withall, endeavoureth to doe all the good he can to all; but especially, to them that are nearest unto him.'²⁴ The article compares

24 Rogers J., *A Treatise of Love* (London: John Dawson for Nathanael Newberry, 1632) 24–25; Cefalu P., *Moral Identity in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: 2004) 139.

ways in which the cultural and pictorial conventions of this kind of love in the early modern Netherlands and at the Caroline court were inflected by the position of, and relationships between, their patrons: on one hand the long-standing partnership of middle-aged, working citizens of Amsterdam, on the other the dynastically motivated but affectionate union of an English sovereign and his French consort.

H. Rodney Nevitt, Jr.'s essay investigates the richly multivalent meanings of Vermeer's *The Milkmaid* by locating it within early modernity's wide-ranging visual, social, and religious discourses connected with the theme of love. As Nevitt acknowledges, the painting's reticence is characteristic of Vermeer's art; it yields its meanings allusively rather than overtly. The juxtaposition of a small tile depicting Cupid and a foot warmer, a familiar motif in Dutch genre painting signifying desire offer, in Nevitt's analysis, subtle clues establishing an amatory ambiance that is enigmatic and open-ended. Expanding upon the usual iconographic sources to elucidate the picture's valences, he invokes correspondences with scenes of the biblical Mary and Martha, including Vermeer's early history painting of the subject, the iconography of Mary as nurturing mother, and *caritas* imagery. As Nevitt shows, *The Milkmaid* resonates with these precedents, integrating and transforming them into a unique and powerful image embodying virtuous *liefde* and service. By engaging the period's complex and polyvalent discourses of love, Nevitt concludes, Vermeer stages in novel form the motto 'Liefde baart kunst', or, as he puts it, Vermeer's 'awareness that love in all its variety, from *eros* to *caritas*, is the space within which the artist gives birth to art'.

Focusing on Gabriel Metsu's *A Woman Seated at a Table and a Man Tuning a Violin* of ca. 1658, Michael Zell explores the interaction between painting, the mirror as paradigm of perfect painting, and the poetics of desire in Dutch realist artifice. While at first sight Metsu's painting appears to typify the elegant modern musical courtship scenes popular in Dutch genre painting from the mid-seventeenth century, Metsu's depiction of the couple disrupts the usual circuit of affect and meaning of such scenes. The man, rather than focusing intently on the woman, looks directly at the beholder as he tunes his violin, while she turns from the musical score in her hands to gaze fixedly at her reflection in a mirror. In this distinctive formulation of musical courtship, Zell argues, Metsu imaginatively adapted a discrete tradition of contemporary love poetry in which the mirror operates metaphorically as both the model and rival of the poet's frustrated efforts to capture his beloved's true image. Metsu merged the Pertrachan *topos* of the mirror as rival to the suitor's affections with the mirror's status as reigning paradigm of painting in seventeenth-century Holland to engage the interrelated themes of love, desire, and absence

shared by the literary and pictorial arts. In this way, Zell shows, Metsu declared his work a labour of love, the ideal of art production embodied in the Dutch adage 'Liefde baart kunst', or Love gives birth to art. Zell further argues that Metsu cast himself and his wife Isabella de Wolff in the roles of jealous lover and preoccupied beloved from the poetic trope, calling attention to the self-consciously performative nature of his vividly *naer het leven* or true-to-life dramatization of 'Ut pictura amor'—'as is a picture, so is love'. Only a select audience of *liefhebbers*—art lovers—would have recognized Metsu and his wife's features; in the guise of the violin player who turns from the painting to address the beholder, Metsu invites them to join him in a duet devoted to their mutual love of art.

Section 5, "Portrayals of Spousal Love" juxtaposes a revisionist analysis of a dynastic emblem that has previously been explained in terms of conjugal love, to a further exploration of the beloved spouse as the inspiration for elite Netherlandish painters. Laura Gelfland untangles the love knots that decorate the church in Brou, close to Bourg-en-Bresse, that Margaret of Austria founded in 1506. The building was the centrepiece of a modest monastic funerary complex where Margaret's husband, Duke Philibert of Savoy, his mother, Margaret of Bourbon, and eventually Margaret herself, were buried. In a world of dynastic politics and clientage, the terms of endearment used by Margaret's father, Maximilian I, and her court poet, Jean Lemaire de Belges, are revealed to be rhetorical means of binding parties together with ties of loyalty, faithfulness, and obedience. Such rhetoric did not necessarily imply emotional intimacy or physical proximity, although it did not preclude them. The love knot was one of the oldest and most important heraldic devices of the House of Savoy. As used by Margaret of Austria at Brou, the symbol tied her enduring and apparently affectionate union with Philibert of Savoy to her strategic negotiation of power and obligation through the language of love.

H. Perry Chapman considers Rubens's and Rembrandt's portrayals of their wives in relation to early modern discourses on the origins of art in love, encapsulated in the Netherlandish motto 'Liefde baart kunst'. After situating Rubens's decorous portraits of his first wife Isabella Brant within their pictorial and art theoretical conventions, and Rembrandt's contrasting approach to representing his wife Saskia van Uylenburgh in various guises, she turns to the issue of the artists' depictions of their second wives, or in Rembrandt's case his common-law wife, nude. Questioning recent claims that Rubens never worked directly from the nude model and that Rembrandt would not have posed Hendrickje Stoffels nude due to moral prohibitions, Chapman rightly emphasizes that Helena Fourment was identified as the model for the nude Venus in Rubens's *Judgement of Paris* by the brother of the king of Spain, and

that contemporary sources and pictorial precedent suggest that Hendrickje may have served as a model for Rembrandt's late painted and printed nudes. Both artists, she argues, engage and domesticate the famous story of Apelles painting the nude Campaspe, the concubine of Alexander the Great, to articulate the ideal of art's inspiration in love. Their treatments of the encounter between male artist and nude female model, however, embody fundamentally different perspectives on women and art. Rubens's portrayals of Helena reject the strict morality of Counter-Reformation Antwerp to pictorialize classical, transcendent ideals of beauty, truth, and love. By contrast, Rembrandt's late nudes, while evoking the trope of the artist's inspiration in erotic love, also acknowledge, very unusually, the raw truth, the discomfort and vulnerability, of naked exposure. Yet while each artist inflects the trope differently, the women always served as instruments of their husbands' larger aesthetic projects and professional ambitions.

Section 6, "Youth, Friendship, and Other Inflections of Divine Love", investigates how proponents of the doctrine of a loving God visualized the eros of divine love. Joseph Chorprenning delves into the epideictic 'word-pictures' that Francis de Sales, the 'Doctor of Divine Love', composed to represent the mystery of the Visitation as 'a lover's visitation', whereby God, 'He-who-saves', reveals both his intense desire (*eros*) to be united with human hearts, and his freely given gift of himself (*agape*) to all who long for him. Based on exegesis of the *Song of Songs*, De Sales's portrayal of the dynamics of divine love issues from the 'master metaphor of a universe of conjoined hearts' that permeates his theology of God-given love. Chorprenning draws an analogy between De Sales's conviction that God makes divine mysteries visible as symptoms of his love, and his efforts to fashion verbal images of such mysteries, imaginable as paintings, the Visitation chief amongst them.

Henry Luttikhuizen analyzes the complex dynamics of mystical love, which is seen to operate both from near and from far, intimately *and* remotely, in Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen's *Noli me tangere*. Here Mary Magdalene and the risen Christ interact like the bride and bridegroom of the *Song of Songs*, but more than this, as Luttikhuizen points out, the picture turns on the paradoxical relation between the Magdalene, who is forbidden from touching Christ (whom at any event she has still to recognize), and Christ, who touches and blesses her, even though she remains oblivious to his presence, at least for now. Van Oostsanen makes use of subtle pictorial devices that evince how intense is Mary's desire to be reunited with her Lord, and conversely, how her spiritual longing reaches out to him, 'touching' him deeply, as it were. The picture's many paradoxes complicate its allusions to sight and touch as the chosen instruments through which divine love is given and received.

Els Stronks elucidates the religious love emblems by Jan Luyken that were, exceptionally, geared towards child, or child-like, users, after describing how early profane love emblems addressed to young people in search of a marriage partner gave way to religious love emblems in which loving union was imagined between the mature believer's soul and Jesus. Her article explores how *Jesus en de ziel* (1678) and *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* (1712) instilled the ambiguous concept of 'Amor Dei'—both 'God's love for me' and 'my love for God'—in their audiences. It shows how Luyken's emblems built on, but ultimately departed from, earlier emblems in which, following Saint Augustine, 'Amor Dei' was envisioned in terms of paternal discipline: a father beating his progeny. Earlier emblems, some by Luyken himself, persistently represented children and young adults in ways that reminded adults that they were sinful at birth, and thus in need of correction—a view that was slowly replaced by the Enlightenment view of the child as a *tabula rasa*. Stronks charts how Luyken's emblems relate to, and diverge from, the two dominant traditions of visual representations of 'Amor Dei' in the early modern period, derived from Augustine and Otto Vaenius. Luyken uses and transforms the existing emblematic allegorical tradition by characterising the child as capable of learning for him or herself, by replacing conjugal or paternal love with parental love as a central metaphor, and by representing 'Amor Dei' through images of divine love that open up a friendship between God and the believer. Now the shared goal, for adults and youngsters alike, is to become one of God's children.

Section 7, "Desire, Fellowship, and Marian Mimesis", focuses on Marian discourses of mimetic love, as exemplified in the collaborative print co-designed by the draftsman Marten de Vos and the composer-musician Cornelis Verdonck, the poetry of Bernardo Accolti, and Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*. Margit Thøfner inquires into the Lutheran thematics of loving fellowship put forward by De Vos, Verdonck, and the engraver Jan Sadeler I in their jointly produced print *Ave gratia plena*. Here and elsewhere in De Vos's oeuvre, the Virgin's motherhood, her 'maternal work', is construed mimetically as the bringing forth of Jesus, the *imago Dei*. In *Ave gratia plena*, the loving, mimetic relation between mother and son is then combined with the score of a four-part motet by Verdonck, structured imitatively (i.e., through 'repetition across the various parts'), that invites the viewer musically to participate in the ideal of Christian fraternity. Visual references to the Annunciation and the Visitation drive home the point that Christian fellowship—between God and the Virgin, between Mary and Elizabeth, between their offspring and us—operates across time and space; so too, the old woman seated next to Mary consists of 'four voices in one', since she can be identified as St. Anne, St. Elizabeth, or the prophetess Anna, and in

addition, holds a book that associates her voice with that of the prophet Isaiah. In these and other ways, the print equates love with the production—visual and aural—of Christian harmony.

Jonathan Unglaub probes the writings and persona of the acclaimed Italian Renaissance poet Bernardo Accolti (1458–1535) as highly self-conscious performances of Petrarchan poetic conventions of unrequited love, and suggests that Accolti's most celebrated poem, a sacred lyric, finds visual parallels in Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*. Known as "il unico" for his brilliant improvised recitations of love poetry, Accolti was immortalized by Raphael in the *Parnassus* fresco of the Stanza della Segantura, where he appears among the ancient and contemporary poets assembled around the serenading Apollo and the muses. Castiglione also included Accolti among the distinguished cast of cultured and aristocratic elites in *The Book of the Courtier*. As Unglaub demonstrates, Accolti's poetry, performed to great acclaim at courts throughout Italy, constituted a daringly witty iteration of the Petrarchan trope of the tormented lover of an unresponsive and unattainable beloved. Accolti's fictive muse was the cruel Julia, though he would also identify her as real women, the Duchess Elisabetta Gonzaga and Isabella d'Este, the Marchioness of Mantua. For Accolti, like all Petrarchan poets, the fragmented description of the perfections of the elusive beloved thematized the absent presence of representational art, a conceit that many early modern artists also embraced in depictions of alluring women as figurations of beauty and painting's affective powers over painter and viewer alike. Pope Leo X was an enthusiastic and beneficent admirer; in 1512 Accolti enthralled the pope at a banquet hosted by Agostino Chigi with the recitation of his most celebrated poem "Capitolo di nostra donna", published as the "Ternale sopra la beata vergine". As Unglaub shows, Accolti's depiction of the Virgin in the poem as a beloved whose perfections surpass all earthly beauty correlate well with Raphael's visionary image of Mary in *The Sistine Madonna*, painted for Pope Julius II in 1512–1513. Raphael's painting engages the same themes of Incarnation and Salvation as Accolti's verses, meditating similarly on the relationship between illusion and reality in the apparition of the figure of the beloved Virgin, vessel through which the Messiah is delivered and embodiment of transcendent, salvific beauty.

The final section, "Picturing Love in the Marketplace", asks how art functioned as an object and catalyst of desire within the mercantile cultures of the Low Countries. Joanna Woodall's contribution handles the 'album amicorum' of the renowned Antwerp merchant-humanist and 'geographus' Abraham Ortelius. The manuscript is considered as a work of art responsive to fundamental threats to spiritual and material well-being during the second half of the sixteenth century. Under the remit of universal, Christian love, it both

acknowledged individual difference and interest, and worked to sustain a sense of communion and harmony within a religiously diverse and geographically scattered group of men. Ortelius and his circle would have known the classic texts on friendship, in which it is accepted that, whilst true friendship is founded in love, friendship can also be socially and materially beneficial. They would also have been familiar with the tradition of thinking originating in Plato's *Symposium*, which addressed the potentially fraught relationship between the virtuous, elevated, 'heavenly' form of Eros and personal physical and material fulfilment. Uniquely, some individual contributions to Ortelius's album were inserted into circular apertures within elaborate frames that were originally designed for a numismatic volume entitled *Deorum dearumque capita ex vetustis numismatibus in gratiam antiquitatis studiosorum effigiata et edita*, published by Ortelius in 1573. Close analysis of the relationship between the two works suggests that the complex, at times contradictory and risky impulses of 'love' are manifested in the album through forms of visual and textual juxtaposition and 'double-sidedness' similar to coins. Such exchanges sought to produce a Christian humanist, mercantile subjectivity in which safety and stability remained in contact with the endless, mobile play of desire.

Multiple discourses of love operate simultaneously in the *constcamer* picture, as Lisa Rosenthal makes clear in her study of Frans Francken the Younger's *Achilles amongst the Daughters of Lycomedes*. The touchstones honour and profit are here juxtaposed to other criteria of value—material, monetary, artisanal, or hereditary—within a picture that celebrates *liefhebbers* (art lovers) and their collections, by positing a mythological warrant for the impulse to possess the objects of one's desire. Every aspect of the Achilles episode functions as an allegorical analogue to the collector's *modus operandi*: the things shown to Achilles and the maidens—precious gems and goldwork interspersed with weaponry—exemplify the kinds of object gathered and displayed in a *constcamer*; that Achilles is as attracted to the sword, as his female companions to decorative blandishments, reveals the indexical relation between art and moral character; and the cunning yet virtuous deception of Achilles tacitly licenses the pictorial deception perpetrated by skillful painters upon their enraptured beholders. As Rosenthal concludes, Francken brings multiple forms of love into conversation: Deidamia's love for Achilles, her sisters' love of finely crafted ornaments, Achilles's love of martial virtue, and last but not least, the '*liefhebber's* love of art'.

Natasha Seaman's essay considers the multiple meanings of Gerrit van Honthorst's *Old Woman with Coins* of 162[3?], reimagining this evocatively-lit half-length painting of a single figure by placing it in company and dialogue

with paintings of venal love as well as the beholder of such works. Usually interpreted as a moralizing allegory of Avarice and/or Sight (Avarice was considered a sin of Sight), the picture, as Seaman puts it, 'does not signify in solitude'. The painting can be understood to form a complement to scenes of prostitution, to which it relates iconographically and conceptually through the figure of the procuress, who is also usually shown turbaned, wrinkled, and with missing teeth. Van Honthorst's old woman descends from the procuress type in depictions of the Prodigal Son in the tavern and brothel pictures, and, as Seaman points out, resembles the procuress in Goltzius's monumental *Danaë* of 1603, a painting he surely knew, and which, like his own composition, juxtaposes an elderly wrinkled woman with money. The convention for including a procuress in visual depictions of the myth reinforced the interpretation of *Danaë* as surrendering her virtue in exchange for Jupiter's gold coins; in brokering the transaction, the procuress deflects and absorbs the venality of Danaë's seduction by coin. Because of her old age and greed, moreover, the procuress introduces a moralizing gloss on the seductions of beautiful women, and paintings of them. These misogynist and reflexive associations of the figure of an old woman with coins, Seaman argues, are implicit in Van Honthorst's *Old Woman with Coins*, a painting that is also implicitly connected with Van Honthorst's other paintings depicting prostitutes. Imagined hanging in close proximity to these pictures, *Old Woman with Coins*, Seaman writes, 'can be seen to stage its own desire in that only through association with others of its kind does it fulfil its function and meaning.'

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PART 1

Vision, Imagination, and Erotic Desire



Figments of the Imagination: Medical and Moral Discourses on Love in the Counter-Reformation*

Wietse de Boer

Whosoever loves a frog will believe the frog to be Diana.¹

Hippocrates, Avicenna, and Galen,
diamond, sapphire, pearl, and ruby,
betony, horehound, and rosemary,
psalm, gospel, and prayer all fall short.²

Sacred love, profane love: it is a classic, often idealized pairing in Renaissance art, literature, and religion. It also evokes the tensions between humanist culture and religious ethics in Europe's social elites at the time of Christianity's deepest premodern crisis. This chapter seeks to explore these connections from a narrow perspective. That is, it examines two samples of Italian courtly love poetry and coeval commentaries—a rich genre in its own right—to uncover

* This essay has benefited from the comments of participants in the conference *Ut pictura amor: The Reflexive Imagery of Love in Artistic Theory and Practice, 1400–1700* (Emory University, October 29–31, 2015) and of Miami University colleagues who discussed a draft at an Early Modern Studies workshop on March 31, 2016. I thank Cynthia Klestinec and Charles Ganelin for their bibliographic suggestions, and Renée Baernstein for her careful reading of the manuscript.

1 Gordonius Bernardus, *Omnium aegritudinum a vertice ad calcem opus praeclarissimum quod Lilium medicinae appellatur* (Parisiis, apud Vivantium Gualtherot: 1542) fol. 111r: 'Si quis amat ranam, ranam putat esse Dianam'. This Latin proverb is frequently cited by medieval and early modern authors on lovesickness.

2 Boccaccio G., *Rime*, ed. A. Lanza (Rome: 2010) LXV, 154–155. This is the first quatrain of a sonnet on lovesickness, 'questo rabbioso spirito d'amore': 'Ipocrate, Avicenna o Galieno, / diamante, zafir, perla o rubino, / bretonica, marrobbio o rosmarino, / salmo, evangelio ed oration vien meno'. I follow the conventional reading 'vien meno' instead of 'vie meno' preferred by Lanza.

the intellectual assumptions made by the authors and/or readers.³ The analysis is focused on the idea of love as a disorder—both in the medical sense of an illness and the religious one of a sin—in the early-modern Catholic world. The goal is to bring two intellectual traditions usually considered distinct, if not antagonistic, in dialog with one another. My analysis suggests considerable overlaps, despite obvious differences, in the ways in which late-medieval and early-modern medical and moral-theological discourses conceived of the erotic. Particularly, they made similar assumptions about the roles played by vision and the imagination. This raises broader questions about the ways in which sexual desire was interpreted, expressed, and contained.

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Let us begin, then, with a sonnet by Giovanni Della Casa, the sixteenth-century Italian humanist, churchman, and inquisitor (1503–1556), as well as the author of a small body of exquisite lyric poetry.

Sì cocente penser nel cor mi siede, o de' dolci miei falli amara pena, ch'io temo non gli spirti in ogni vena mi sugga et la mia vita arda e deprede.	Such burning thought is in my heart, oh bitter penalty for my sweet errors, that, I fear, it sucks the spirits from my veins, and burns and ravages my life.
Come per dubbio calle huom move il piede con falso duce, et quegli a morte il mena, tal io l'hora ch'Amor libera e piena sovra i miei spirti signoria vi diede,	Like someone walking down a dubious alley by a false guide directed towards death, so I, when Amor gave you free, unfettered reign over my spirits,
il mio di voi pensier fido et soave sperando, cieco, ov'ei mi scorse, andai: hor mi ritrovo da riposo lunge.	trusting in my true and tender thought of you, blindly went where it led me; now I find myself far from repose.

3 For another example of the approach pursued here, see Maggi A., “‘The Shadows and Their Beloved Bodies’: Medicine, Philosophy of Love, and Demonology in Pompeo della Barba’s *Interpretation of a Platonic Sonnet*”, in Maggi A., *In the Company of Demons. Unnatural Beings, Love, and Identity in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago – London: 2006) 104–138.

Ch'a me per voi disleal fatto et grave	For turned disloyal and wretched
	because of you,
l'anima traviata opprime et punge,	it weighs on my misguided soul, and
	hurts it,
sì ch'io ne pero et no'l sostengo homai. ⁴	so that I perish and can persist no more.

In the century following his death, Della Casa's poetry was the subject of extensive philological and critical commentaries. At the time this thriving form of literary study, which is only now beginning to receive the scholarly attention it deserves, was actively engaged with sixteenth-century lyric poetry.⁵ Thus the celebrated Neapolitan (but Calabrian-born) surgeon, anatomist, and humanist Marco Aurelio Severino (1580–1656) discussed the amorous predicament evoked in *Sì cocente penser* in great detail.⁶ While his commentary on Della Casa's *Rime* generally focused on its rhetorical strategies, based on the principles of Hermogenes' *Περὶ ἰδεῶν* (*On Types of Style*),⁷ the subject of *Sì cocente penser* prompted Severino to reflect on the nature of love itself. This poem (he said) described love's conception in thought: thought first generates sweet feelings (*dolcezze*) in the lover but then trips him up and throws him into a state of bitterness, pain, and despair. (Severino's assumption is evidently of a male lover and female beloved.) Della Casa's larger point, Severino noted, was 'to show the nature of love, which is nothing but the power of thought, the root

4 Della Casa G., *Rime*, ed. G. Tanturli (Parma: 2001) 6–9; the translation is mine. On the dating, see Caretti L., "Per un futuro apparato critico delle 'Rime' di Mons. Della Casa", in *Leonardo* 11–12 (1942) 205–216, later in Caretti L., *Studi e ricerche di letteratura italiana* (Florence: 1951) 65–98.

5 See Danzi M. – Leporatti R. (eds.), *Il Poeta e il suo pubblico. Lettura e commento dei testi lirici nel Cinquecento. Convegno internazionale di studi (Ginevra, 15–17 maggio 2008)* (Geneva: 2012). For the subgenre of poetic self-commentary, see below, n. 34.

6 Severino's comment on this poem can be found in a 1694 edition of the *Rime*, accompanied by several commentaries and introductory texts: Della Casa Giovanni, *Rime [...] sposte per M. Aurelio Severino secondo l'Idee di Hermogene, con la giunta delle spositioni di Sertorio Quattromani, et di Gregorio Caloprese* (Napoli, presso Antonio Bulifon: 1694) 9–14. These texts were reprinted in several eighteenth-century editions of Della Casa's works. On the life of Severino, see the entry "Severino, Marco Aurelio", in *Enciclopedia Treccani*, available online at <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/marco-aurelio-severino/> (last consulted June 8, 2016). Older sources include Magliari P., *Elogio storico di M.A. Severino* (Naples: 1815); entry "De Angelis, Marco Aurelio Severino", in *Biografia universale antica e moderna*, 53 (Venice: 1829); De Renzi S., *Storia della medicina in Italia*, 4 (Naples: 1846) 26–28, 77–80, 92–94, and passim; and Accattatis L. (ed.), *Le biografie degli uomini illustri delle Calabrie* (Cosenza: 1869) 156–161.

7 On Hermogenes' influence into the Renaissance, see Patterson A.M., *Hermogenes and the Renaissance: Seven Ideas of Style* (Princeton: 1970); see also Wooten C.W. (ed. – trans.), *Hermogenes' On Types of Style* (Chapel Hill: 1987).

and support of love (Amor), which is perceived in it: it is like the flame on a burning log'.⁸ The critic traced the poetic pedigree of this understanding of the power of thought to Ariosto:

Pensier, dicea, che'l cor m'agghiacci [...] My mind destroys my own
ed ardi,
E causi il duol che sempre il rode e lima, heart, burning it, freezing, and abusing,⁹

and to Virgil, who opened the fourth book of his *Aeneid* as follows:

At regina gravi iamdudum saucia cura But the queen, long since smitten
with a grievous
vulnus alit venis et caeco carpitur igni. love-pang, feeds the wound with her
life-blood, and is wasted with fire
unseen.¹⁰

Yet Severino was not concerned primarily with the poem's literary genealogy. Instead, he undertook a line-by-line analysis of its style and rhetorical strategy. He concluded that ruin might ensue when tyrannical Amor and an 'ungrateful' woman were joined by the lover's treacherous thought. The lover would then be right to say: if 'these three conspire against me, I have reason to fear for my sanity'.¹¹

Sanity, here used in the general sense of health (*salute*), is a key term, reflective of Severino's clinical approach to the poem. He explained it as he prefaced his commentary with a definition of love: 'Leaving aside for the moment the way of the Platonists and other philosophers, I will follow that of the medical doctors, which makes more sense'.¹² The 'way of the Platonists' summarily dismissed here no doubt refers to the long Platonist tradition in Italian court

8 Della Casa, *Rime* 13–14: 'l'esterno [fine] è mostrare la natura d'Amore, che altro non è, che la forza del nostro pensiero, che è la radice e sostegno dell'Amore, il quale in lui s'apprende, ed è come la fiamma nell'allumato legno'.

9 Ariosto Ludovico, *Orlando Furioso*, canto I, stanza 4 [actually 41]; translation in Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso. A New Verse Translation*, trans. D.R. Slavitt (Cambridge-London: 2009) 11.

10 Virgil, *Aeneid*, IV, 1–2, cited from the Loeb edition, trans. H.R. Fairclough, 2 vols., revised ed. (Cambridge-London: 1986) I, 396–397.

11 Della Casa, *Rime* 14: 'Quando siano il Tiranno Amore, l'ingrata Donna amata, e'l traditor proprio Pensiero in un congiurati contra la salute d'un sicuro innamorato, ben può esso disperar salute; contro a me son questi congiurati: adunque ben posso io disperar salute'.

12 Ibid. 11: 'Ma per discorrere del principal sentimento del Sonetto, stimo, che fia bene discorrer prima, che cosa sia Amore: e lasciando al presente la via de' Platonici, e d'altri Filosofi, seguirò quella de' Medici, che è più sensata'.

literature, deeply ingrained when Della Casa wrote his poetic works and in subsequent criticism. We will return to this interpretive tradition. For now let us focus on Severino's medical explanation:

Amor, they [the medical doctors] say, is the corruption of the imaginative faculty as it represents false things to reason. Therefore they connect the entire essence of Amor to the imagination, and find it there. And, indeed, the entire power and impact of love resides in the imagination; in fact, the imagination is the true see where [Amor] has its roots and foundation. Because of the imagination the object of love is always present to lovers.¹³

Della Casa's term 'thought' (*penser*) is thus explained as the operations of the imagination, specifically the mental representation of the absent beloved, which in turn assumed a prior act of visual perception. Yet the path that led from vision to imagination to representation was far from straightforward:

Because of the imagination a trunk, a rock, a twig, a tree may appear to them to be the beloved woman. Because of the imagination, they speak but are silent, they think they freeze but don't, they think they walk but do not move. Because of the imagination they do not taste what they eat or drink, nor feel whatever else they take pleasure in. Because of the imagination they are awake entire nights. Because of the imagination they suffer what they would not suffer for any other reason. In short, lovers feel all things good or bad because of their imagination.¹⁴

In sum, the lover's imagination radically affected all perceptions to the point of distortion—vision along with the other senses.

13 Ibid.: '*Amor, dicono costoro, est corruptio virtutis Imaginativae falsa repraesentantis Ratiocinativae*. Il perchè riferiscono tutto l'esser d'Amor all'Imaginativa, e in quella il ripongono. E di vero nell'Imaginativa è tutta la possanza, e tutta la forza d'Amore; anzi il vero suo seggio, ove è fondato e radicato, è l'Imaginativa. Per l'Imaginativa è sempre presente agli amanti l'amato oggetto'.

14 Ibid. 11–12: 'Per l'Imaginativa un tronco, un sasso, uno sterpo, un albero par lor l'amata Donna. Per l'Imaginativa parlano e non parlano, par loro stringere e non istringono, par lor camminare e nulla si muovono. Per l'Imaginativa non gustano del mangiare, né del bere, né dell'altre cose che piacciono. Per l'Imaginativa vegghiano le notti intiere. Per l'Imaginativa soffrono quel che per verun'altro conto non soffrirebbero. Et in somma tutte cose buone e ree si sentono dagli amanti per cagion della lor imaginatione'.

Amor Hereos as Medical Diagnosis

Severino's reading of Della Casa's poetry agrees with the findings of modern scholarship on sexual desire in premodern times: it confirms, particularly, the influence of a long tradition of medical speculation about lovesickness—variously called *ilishi*, *amor hereos*, or love melancholy—on literary representation. In a pioneering philological study of 1914, John Livingstone Lowes traced the intellectual sources of the idiosyncratic concept of *hereos* back to ancient Greek philosophy and medicine, and reconstructed its transmission by way of Avicenna and other Arab scholars to Latin authors like Constantinus Africanus (1020–87), Bernard de Gordon (ca. 1258–1318/20), Valesco de Tarenta (fl. 1382–1418), and Michele Savonarola (1385–1468). In the last few decades, a number of studies have further explored this medical tradition.¹⁵ An important finding concerns the social connotations of the concept. In the medieval European tradition, the most commonly used term, *amor hereos* or *heroicus*, had semantic implications that went well beyond its medical sense. Attempts at etymological explication pointed not only to the Greek *eros* but also the Latin *heros* (hero, hence *heroicus*) and *herus* (lord), suggesting that lovesickness was a malady afflicting Europe's noble elites. According to Bernard de Gordon (fl. late thirteenth to early fourteenth c.), 'it is called *hereos* because *hereosi* and noble men used to suffer this emotional state because of their affluence of delights'; Gérard du Berry (fl. 1236) spoke of nobles' 'riches and the softness of their lives' ('divicias et mollitiem vite').¹⁶ This explains in part how medical speculation about this condition could come to influence literary representations in

15 Lowes J.L., "The Lovers Maladye of Hereos", *Modern Philology* 11, 4 (1914), 491–546. More recent studies include Ciavolella M., *La malattia d'amore dall'antichità al Medioevo* (Rome: 1976); Jacquart D. – Thomasset C., *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, trans. M. Adamson (Princeton: 1988); Wack M.F., *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The Viaticum and its Commentaries* (Philadelphia: 1990); the long, excellent introduction to Ferrand J., *A Treatise on Lovesickness*, ed. D.A. Beecher – M. Ciavolella (Syracuse, NY: 1990) 1–202; Beecher D.A. – Ciavolella M. (eds.), *Eros and Anteros: The Medical Traditions of Love in the Renaissance* (Ottawa: 1992); and Zaun S. – Watzke D. – Steigerwald J. (eds.), *Imagination und Sexualität. Pathologien der Einbildungskraft im medizinischen Diskurs der frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: 2004).

16 See on the term's complex genesis, Lowes, "The Lovers Maladye" (summary at 521–524); Boase R., *The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love: A Critical Study of European Scholarship* (Manchester: 1977) 132–133 (including quote from Bernard); Wack, *Lovesickness* 60–62; Wells M.A., *The Secret Wound: Love-Melancholy and Early Modern Romance* (Stanford: 2007) 22–24 (quote from Gerard of Berry at 22).

troubadour lyrics and subsequent traditions of courtly poetry. This influence is the subject of a wave of recent scholarship.¹⁷

Most of these scholars, some of whom were inspired by Giorgio Agamben's influential *Stanze*, emphasized the role of the imagination in lovesickness.¹⁸ For ancient and medieval authors, passionate love could become pathological and obsessive due to an imaginative focus on the absent, unreachable beloved. This psychological explanation continued to resonate among early-modern medical authorities: it was rearticulated in the late sixteenth century by the Dutch (but Italian-trained) physician Pieter van Foreest (1521–1597) and returned in force in the early seventeenth century—that is, Severino's active years—in treatises by Jacques Ferrand (fl. early seventeenth c.), Daniel Sennert (1572–1637), and others. Massimo Ciavolella has correctly placed Severino's medical explanation within this age-old interpretive tradition.¹⁹

In fact, Severino's very definition of love as 'the corruption of the imaginative faculty as it represents false things to reason' ('*corruptio virtutis imaginativae, falsa repraesentantis ratiocinativae*') relied on medieval medical texts. It corresponds almost word for word to the formula offered by the Portuguese medical author Valesco de Tarenta (Portuguese, fl. 1382–1418), in a work published in print as *Philonium Pharmaceuticum* from the late fifteenth century onwards.²⁰ More elaborately, the famous fifteenth-century medical authority Michele Savonarola (ca. 1384–ca. 1468), with whose work Severino was no doubt familiar, explained the role of the imagination as follows:

[This condition] is further associated with an excessive, continuous operation of the imaginative and cogitative powers around the desire for

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- 17 See, among other studies, Heffernan C.F., *The Melancholy Muse: Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Early Medicine* (Pittsburgh: 1995); Peri M., *Malato d'amore. La medicina dei poeti e la poesia dei medici* (Soveria Mannelli: 1996); Folger R., *Images in Mind: Lovesickness, Spanish Sentimental Fiction and Don Quijote* (Chapel Hill: 2002); Wells, *The Secret Wound*; Pethes N. – Richter S. (eds.), *Medizinische Schreibweisen. Ausdifferenzierung und Transfer zwischen Medizin und Literatur (1600–1900)* (Tübingen: 2008); and Dawson L., *Lovesickness and Gender in Early Modern English Literature* (Oxford: 2008).
- 18 Agamben G., *Stanze. La parola e il fantasma nella cultura occidentale* (Turin: 1977); trans. R.L. Martinez, *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture* (Minneapolis: 1993).
- 19 Ciavolella M., "Eros and the Phantasms of Hereos", in *Eros and Anteros* 75–85, esp. 76–77.
- 20 Valesco de Taranta, *Philonium Pharmaceuticum et Cheirurgicum, de medendis omnibus cum internis tum externis humani corporis affectibus* (Francoforti, Ex officina Chalcographica Romani Beati: 1599) 53: 'Amor, Graece, eroos, est affectus, quo amantes prosequuntur mulierem cuius caussa est corruptio virtutis imaginativae, falsa repraesentantis rationali facultati'.

the perceived object. The development is as follows: the imaginative power will consider the object first brought to it by the exterior sense for the most part as very desirable; then the estimation will cause it to be pursued, even beyond what is appropriate; and in this, judgment is corrupted. Consequently, the love-struck will pursue the beloved above all, ignoring everything else and considering happiness to consist in possessing her.²¹

Even in Savonarola's day this understanding was hardly new: it agreed with the analysis offered centuries earlier by medieval authorities such as Arnau de Vilanova (Arnaldus de Villa Nova, ca. 1240–1311).²² Yet what does it mean for a celebrated seventeenth-century physician to apply an old medical diagnosis to the interpretation of sixteenth-century courtly poetry? What position did this imply in literary exegesis, and more broadly in the cultural debate of the day? To answer this question, Severino's rejection of 'Platonist and other philosophical' interpretations of the poem may be a good place to start.

A Neapolitan Debate

In the early 1600s Della Casa's limited but refined body of poetry enjoyed a notable revival in Neapolitan literary circles. A new edition of the *Rime* appeared in 1616, accompanied by a set of detailed philological annotations by Sertorio Quattrimano of Cosenza (ca. 1541–1607), a humanist and literary critic, as well as a philosopher influenced by Bernardino Telesio (1509–1588).²³ Meanwhile, the

21 Savonarola Michele, *Practica maior* (Venetiis, apud Iuntas: 1547), fol. 69r: 'Coniuncta aut est nimia et continua operatio virtutis imaginativae et cogitativae circa desiderium rei comprehensae. Et modus generationis est quia apprehenso obiecto a virtute imaginativa primo per sensum exteriorem sibi deportato secundum plurimum tanquam multum delectibili, deinde virtus estimativa inducit ipsum esse appetendum et ultra quam conveniat, et in hoc corrumpitur iudicium. Unde philocapti super omnem rem amasiam appetunt omnia alia spernentes, et existimantes suam felicitatem esse si habere possent'. On Savonarola, see further Dell'Anna G., 'Il tema della melancolia nella *Practica Maior* (VI, 11–20) di Michele Savonarola', in Rotondi Secchi Tarugi L. (ed.), *Malinconia ed allegrezza nel Rinascimento* (Milan: 1999) 367–384.

22 Jacquart – Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine* 84.

23 *Rime di Mons. Giovanni della Casa sposte dal Signor Sertorio Quattrimano* (Napoli, appresso Lazaro Scoriggio: 1616), published as part of the *Rime, et prose del signor Horatio Marte*, edited by Carlo Tramontano (Napoli, Lazaro Scoriggio, 1616). Up to that time numerous editions of Della Casa's works, usually entitled *Rime, et prose di M. Giovanni della Casa*, had been published (but without commentaries) since 1558, including: Vinegia, Nicolo Bevilacqua: 1558; Napoli, Gio. Maria Scotto, 1560; Fiorenza, Giunti: 1565; Venegia,

critic Pompeo Garigliano (fl. early seventeenth c.) lectured on two of the poems at the Accademia degli Oziosi and, again in 1616, published these extensive commentaries.²⁴ In the same years the poet Giambattista Basile (1566–1632)—another member of the Oziosi—published new editions of the lyrical poetry of Pietro Bembo and Della Casa, along with a philological study of both poets.²⁵

For our purposes Garigliano's lectures are most interesting, since one of them offered a long analysis of *Sì cocente penser*. It is quite possible that Marco Aurelio Severino, also a member of the Oziosi, had this commentary in mind when he criticized 'Platonist and other philosophical' interpretations of Della Casa's work. Like Severino, Garigliano relied heavily on Hermogenes' rhetorical treatise to analyze the poem's stylistic features. But he also cited extensively from ancient authorities to explain the amorous passion described in *Sì cocente penser*. He drew on Plato, Aristotle, and Galen to distinguish cognition and appetite, intellect and sense, hate (*irascibile*) and desire (*concupiscibile*), and to seek to locate the source of the emotions in particular organs. Following Aristotle, Garigliano settled on the heart as the cradle of love. Della Casa's first line (*Sì cocente penser nel cor mi siede*) confirmed that the poet had followed that theory. The critic rejected the view that thought (the poem's *penser*) descended from the *dianoia*, the reasoning faculty located in the brain, to 'wrap itself around the amorous passion, which resides in the heart'.²⁶ Instead, thought was a discourse originating in the heart: according to Garigliano, Plato had defined it in the *Theaetetus* as 'a kind of silent, soundless

Domenico Farri: 1565 and 1579; Venetia, Domenico & Gio. Battista Guerra: 1567; Fiorenza, Giunti, 1571; Venetia, Giovanantonio Bertano, 1574 and 1575; Venetia, Fabio & Agostino Zoppini: 1584; Fiorenza, Filippo Giunti: 1598; Venetia, Lucio Spineda: 1598, 1601 and 1612; Venetia, Ber. Giunti and Gio. Battista Ciotti: 1609; Fiorenza, Gio. Donato e Bernardino Giunti: 1616). On Quattrimano's biography, see "Vita di Sertorio Quattromani gentiluomo e accademico cosentino", in *Opere di Monsignor Giovanni Della Casa. Edizione veneta novissima. Tomo secondo ...* (Venezia, Angiolo Pasinello: 1728) xiv–xviii.

24 Garigliano Pompeo, *Due lettioni [...] lette nell'Academia de gli Otiosi di Napoli sopra due sonetti di Monsig. della Casa* (Napoli, per Gio. Domenico Roncagliolo: 1616) 5–46.

25 *Rime di M. Pietro Bembo de gli errori ... purgate* (Napoli, Constantino Vitale, 1616); *Rime di M. Giovanni della Casa, riscontrate coi migliori originali e ricorrette* (Napoli, Costantino Vitale: 1617); Basile Giambattista, *Osservazioni intorno alle rime del Bembo e del Casa* (Napoli, Constantino Vitale: 1618). On Basile, see Alberto Asor Rosa's entry in the *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 7 (Roma: 1970) 76–81. On the Neapolitan literary milieu of these years, see now Riga P.G., *G.B. Manso e la cultura letteraria a Napoli nel primo Seicento: Tasso, Marino, gli Oziosi* (Bologna: 2015), esp. 95 and 126–129 (on Garigliano) and 88–89, 93–96, and 129–130 (on Quattrimano).

26 Garigliano, *Due lettioni* 15.

conversation the soul had within itself'.²⁷ From here, the critic proceeded to analyze the affective qualities of the love experience based on the opposition between sweetness and bitterness, love's effects on the blood (from which, the sonnet said, spirits were 'sucked away'), and the influence of black bile. Citing Galen and Hippocrates, then Aristotle and Plato, Garigliano further discussed the connections with body temperature, humidity, and dryness. In short, his interpretation gravitated towards a physiological, not psychological explanation, suggesting the persistence of a humoral explanation of sexual desire which medieval authors had at times combined with a psychological account of the condition.²⁸ To the extent that the amorous passion involved thought—the point foregrounded in the poem—it was discursive. In Garigliano's interpretation there is not a word about vision, imagination, and representation, the elements highlighted by Severino.

This is not to say that Neoplatonist philosophy had nothing to say on the subject. To the contrary, Marsilio Ficino's reinterpretation of Plato's love theory pointed to vision as the avenue by which the perception of physical beauty might be transformed into a spiritual experience through a process of abstraction. The possibility of an ascent from the courtship of a lady to divine love offered an ideological justification to high-minded defenders of court culture such as Pietro Bembo and Baldassare Castiglione. Yet (as I have argued elsewhere) that lofty vision proved untenable when, over the course of the sixteenth century, a moral critique of court culture joined forces with a more down-to-earth view of sexuality. On the one hand, the moral argument, already acknowledged in a tradition connecting Ficino to Castiglione, emphasized the dangers and realities of physical temptation. On the other hand, philosophical critics of Platonic idealism recognized that love's sensory basis was by no means limited to vision: some went as far as seeing touch as its defining feature.²⁹ Considered in this light, Severino's medical explanation of

27 Garigliano's reference is actually to the *Sophist*, 263e; see Fowler H.N. (ed.), *Plato, with an English Translation*, vol. 2 (Cambridge-London: 1952) 440–441; the *Theaetetus* does discuss *dianoia* in another context, e.g. at 189b12–c2 (*ibid.* 176–177).

28 See Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages* 39–40, 58–59, 98–101.

29 De Boer W., "Spirits of Love: Castiglione and Neoplatonic Discourses of Vision", in Göttler C. – Neuber W. (eds.), *Spirits Unseen: The Representation of Subtle Bodies in Early Modern European Culture*, Intersections 9 (Leiden – Boston: 2007) 121–140. The role of sight and hearing in High Renaissance discourses of love, both profane and sacred, is emphasized in Zarri G., "Eyes and Heart, Eros and Agape: Forms of Love in the Renaissance", *Historical Reflections* 41.2 (2015) 53–69; the complex visual imagination of courtly love at the time of Pietro Bembo and Baldassare Castiglione has found a remarkable treatment in Bolzoni L., *Il cuore di cristallo. Ragionamenti d'amore, poesia e ritratto nel Rinascimento*

the genesis of love is particularly interesting, in that it constituted a renewed acknowledgement of the power of visual perception without the idealizing baggage of Neoplatonist thought. To the contrary, Severino's clinical eye recognized the pathological potential of the love affect. In doing so, he shifted the attention from the external to the internal senses. The key to his interpretation was not visual perception per se but the way in which it was processed by the imagination.

2

If Severino, in analyzing lovesickness as a defect of the imagination, reached back to an established medical tradition, this represented a choice nonetheless. As we have seen, it involved a rejection of Neoplatonic as well as humoral explanations of the phenomenon. His decision may also have reflected a rising interest in the workings of the imagination that went well beyond medical science and natural philosophy. Such an interest is on display most clearly in the moral-religious sphere. Again, I want to suggest, this had ramifications for literary expression and/or interpretation.

To make this case, let us begin once more with a love sonnet, composed by the greatest poet of the Counter-Reformation period, Torquato Tasso (1544–1595).

De la vostra bellezza il mio pensiero	All other things my fond mind may surmise
vago, men bello stima ogn'altro obietto;	to match your beauty pall. If it in vain
e se di mille mai finge un aspetto	seeks in one thing of thousands to obtain
per agguagliarlo a voi, non giunge al vero;	an image of you, truth eludes its eyes.
ma se l'idolo vostro ei forma intero	But if it makes you like an idol rise
prende da sì bell'opra in sé diletto,	all whole, that great work soothes all inward pain;
e 'n lui pur giunge forze al primo affetto	by such strange art it feels that it shall gain

(Turin: 2010). On the anti-Platonic turn in the Counter-Reformation, see by the same author, "Ercole e i pigmei, ovvero Controriforma e intellettuali neoplatonici", *Rinascimento* 21 (1981) 285–296.

la nova meraviglia e 'l magistero.	that first desire for which it lives and dies.
Fermo è dunque d'amarvi; e se ben v'ama, in sé stesso ed in voi non si divide, ma con voi ne l'amar s'unisce in guisa	There fixed, it loves you; and, though loving there, no more from you than from itself takes flight, but by there loving you, both night and day,
che non sete da lui giammai divisa per tempo o loco; e mentre ei spera e brama vi mira e mirerà qual prima ei vide.	ensures that you shall never be away in time or place. It hopes and pines elsewhere but sees you there, and will, as at first sight. ³⁰

Like Della Casa's sonnet, this lyric poem addresses the themes of vision and its truthfulness, the presence and absence of the beloved, the lover's mental operations (*pensiero*) and imagination. It speaks of amorous anguish (*mentre ei spera e brama*) but is hardly the cry of lovesickness voiced by Della Casa. This is a point worth noting, since Torquato Tasso, the *poète maudit* of the Counter-Reformation, was intimately familiar with and a practitioner of the poetry of melancholic love.³¹ The tale of Tancredi and Clorinda, a central episode in the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, will suffice to make the point. In a nocturnal battle, the heroic knight and virtuous crusader mortally wounded a Muslim adversary in full armor who, when it was too late, turned out to be his beloved Clorinda. Later, the princess returned as a phantasm, tormenting the doomed lover as she appeared to him in a haunted forest. Marion Wells has argued convincingly

30 Text and translation here follow Tasso T., *Love Poems for Lucrezia Bendidio*, ed. – trans. by M. Wickert (New York: 2011) 22–23. Like many literary translations, this version occasionally strays from the literal text. This is particularly relevant here for the term *pensiero*, which is better translated as 'thought' rather than 'mind'; a more direct reading of 'prende da sì bell'opra in sé diletto' is 'it takes delight in such a beautiful work'.

31 Interesting in this context is Tasso's own medical history, on which see Basile B., *Poeta melancholicus: Tradizione classica e follia nell'ultimo Tasso* (Pisa: 1984); Quondam A., "Il gentiluomo malinconico", in Berardinelli A. – Farabotta B. (eds.), *Arcipelago malinconia. Scenari e parole dell'interiorità* (Rome: 2001) 93–123; and Calabritto M., "Tasso's Melancholy and its Treatment: A Patient's Uneasy Relationship with Medicine and Physicians", in Haskell Y.A. (ed.), *Diseases of the Imagination and Imaginary Disease in the Early Modern Period* (Turnhout: 2011) 201–228.

that in depicting this obvious case of love melancholy Tasso depended on the medical pathology of *amor hereos*.³²

Yet Tasso was also a troubled Catholic very much aware of the medieval theological tradition, increasingly so as he approached the end of this life, when he read Thomas Aquinas's *Summa* and *Opuscula*, among other works.³³ This becomes evident in the remarkable exegesis of his lyric poetry Tasso left behind in the form of a newly ordered edition furnished with copious annotations—a form of literary self-commentary that was on the rise towards the end of the sixteenth century.³⁴ In this case, moreover, the effort was part of the aging poet's attempt to shape his literary legacy by supplying it with an interpretive frame. No doubt, the publication of several pirated versions of his work played a role in this decision, as did most likely the traumatic experience of his confinement in the hospital of Sant'Anna (1579–1586), and his subsequent turn toward religious poetry.

How, then, did Tasso explain his own sonnet *De la vostra bellezza*? Just as Severino (in reading Della Casa's poem), he took the word *pensiero* as the starting point of his interpretation:

Thought (*il pensiero*) appropriately resembles the painter, because (as Aristotle says) fantasy, or memory, is similar to a painting. If perchance images fade due to age, they have to be refreshed.³⁵

32 Wells, *The Secret Wound* 137–177.

33 Ardisino E., “Il pensiero e la cultura religiosa di Torquato Tasso”, *Lettere italiane* 56 (2003) 592–614, esp. 598; and Treherne M., “Liturgy as a Mode of Theological Discourse in Tasso's Late Works”, in Brundin A. – Treherne M. (eds.), *Forms of Faith in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Aldershot, Hants. – Burlington, VT: 2009) 233–253. Aquinas's influence is obvious in Tasso's *Giudicio sovra la Gerusalemme riformata*, ed. C. Gigante (Rome: 2000) 47, 49, 56 and passim; and see the editor's comment about Tasso's sources, *ibid.* xxv.

34 I have consulted the following edition: *Delle rime del Sig. Torquato Tasso parte prima, di novo dal medesimo in questa nuova impressione ordinate, corrette, accresciute, et date* (Brescia, Pietro Maria Marchetti: 1592); the sonnet with commentary is at 36–38. Studies of the genre of poetic self-commentary include: Roush S., *Hermes' Lyre: Italian Poetic Self-Commentary from Dante to Tommaso Campanella* (Toronto: 2002); Maggi A., “L'autocommento di Celso Cittadini in *Rime Platoniche* (1585)”, in *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 11, 1 (2005) 111–115; several essays in Danzi M. – Leporatti R. (eds.), *Il Poeta e il suo pubblico*; particularly on Tasso, see Martignone V., “Esemplarità e distacco: l'autoesegesi tassiana alle rime d'amore”, *ibid.* 399–406.

35 Tasso, *Delle rime* 36: ‘Asomiglia il pensiero al Pittore, convenevolmente, perché la fantasia, o la memoria, come dice Aristotele, è simile ad una pittura, ne la quale se per vecchiezza alcuna volta si cancellano l'imagini, bisogna rinnovarle’. Tasso went on to quote both St. Basil and Petrarch to support the point. Aristotle made the comparison between

Here Tasso makes explicit what in Della Casa's poem remained at best implied, only to be drawn out by Severino's interpretation. For Tasso, that is, the mental operations of 'thought' had a mimetic function: they (rather than the object of perception) produced an image that remained present to the lover even in the absence of the beloved. It thus resembled a work of art: the lover 'takes pleasure in the beauty of his lady as if it were his own work, made by his own imagination'.³⁶ In other words, as he took pains to assure the reader, this love was undivided, resting both in the beloved and himself. Then, in a notable twist, he turned to Thomas Aquinas to explain the lover's persistence as a *habitus*, a moral disposition.³⁷ His love lives in him, and 'dies with him as well, that is, in the intellectual imagination which he has formed'. The point was that 'here, unlike in other poems, the poet does not count himself among the incontinent'.³⁸ The moral subtext is obvious: the lover should not fall prey

memory and painting in *On Memory and Recollection*, 450b 20–26 (Aristotle, *On the Soul*, *Parva Naturalia*, *On Breath*, ed. and trans. W.S. Hett, Loeb Aristotle in Twenty-Three Volumes, vol. 8 [Cambridge, MA – London: 1986] 294–297).

- 36 For this artistic trope, common in Tasso (and also his father Bernardo), see Bolzoni L., *Poesia e ritratto nel Rinascimento*, with poetic texts ed. by F. Pich (Rome – Bari: 2008) 113–116. Other examples cited there include, 'La bella donna, che nel fido core / stile amoroso del pensier dipinse', and 'Per figurar Madonna al senso interno, / dove torrai, pensier, l'ombre e i colori'? In his 1591 commentary on the latter, Tasso explained that he had in mind the imagination: 'De' sensi alcuni sono esteriori, così detti propriamente, cioè il viso, l'udito, l'odorato, il gusto, et il tatto; altri interiori, come il senso comune e la fantasia. Intende adunque de la fantasia, o de l'imaginatione che vogliam dirla' (Tasso, *Delle rime* 102). The idea fits in the long tradition of poetic *paragone* with artistic renditions of the beloved (see Bolzoni, *Poesia e ritratto* 10–30). That the Aristotelian roots of this comparison were on Tasso's mind is likely the result of his rereading of Aristotle's *Poetics* in these years (see Ardisino E., "Il pensiero e la cultura religiosa" 598).
- 37 On the scholastic notion of *habitus*, see Nederman C.J., "Nature, Ethics, and the Doctrine of 'Habitus': Aristotelian Moral Psychology in the Twelfth Century", *Traditio* 45 (1989–1990) 87–110. On Aquinas, see McCay-Morrissey N.B., *A Contemporary Analysis of the Nature of the Soul in the Later Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274)*, PhD dissertation (University College Dublin, 2003); Elders L., *The Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas: Happiness, Natural Law and the Virtues* (Frankfurt am Main-New York: 2005) and Miner R.C., "Aquinas on Habitus", in Sparrow T. – Hutchinson A. (eds.), *A History of Habit from Aristotle to Bourdieu* (Lanham: 2013) 67–88. Aquinas's place in the long elaboration of the modern concept is briefly referenced in Lizardo O., "Habitus", in Kaldis B. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Philosophy and the Social Sciences* (Los Angeles: 2013) 1: 405–407. For some more discussion, see Malikail J., "Moral Character: Hexis, Habitus and 'Habit'", *Minerva—An Internet Journal of Philosophy* 7 (2003) (last consulted on September 11, 2016).
- 38 Ibid. 37: 'Ma se l'idolo vostro: Si compiace de la bellezza de la sua donna, come d'opera propria, e d'imaginatione fatta da lui. Fermo è dunque d'amarvi: Perche l'Amore è habito,

to an overpowering carnal temptation. If the imagination here plays a positive role, in assuring the permanence of pure love, let us remember that it could also work the other way. Such is the case with the love melancholy afflicting Tancredi. The danger is also evident in the *Rime*. One sonnet (as Tasso explained it) took Carnival as an occasion to compare the lover's '*imaginationi*' to masks: 'As Love, which transforms me, wishes, / I take on ever new appearances'. Tasso commented tersely on this power of deception: 'so powerful is the imagination'.³⁹

In any case, it is evident that Tasso appealed to scholastic theology both to explicate the workings of the lover's imagination, and to express and overcome his moral qualms about traditions and practices of courtly love. This point is confirmed by Tasso's evident purpose in offering a new edition of his lyric poetry. He started it with a sonnet, *Vere fur queste gioie e questi ardori* ('True were those joys, and that fire'), whose penitential intent is obvious:

e se non fu de' più ostinati cori	and if my heart was not quite dull, my cries
ne' vani affetti il mio, di ciò lagnarme	not quite inept, I should not deem it wrong
già non devrei, ché più laudato parme	if penance now win better praise among
il ripentirsi, ove honestà s'honori.	those who to modest virtue yield the prize.
Hor con gli essemi miei gli accorti amanti,	Warned by my fate, let other lovers now,
leggendo i miei dilette, e 'l van desire,	reading how my desires and joys proved vain,
ritolgano ad Amor de l'alme il freno.	seize back from Love the bridle of the soul. ⁴⁰

come dice S. Tomaso. Et in questo luogo il Poeta non si numera fra gli incontinenti, come ne gli altri. E se ben v'ama in se stesso, et muor in se stesso, cio è ne l'imaginatione intelletuale ch'egli ha formata'.

39 Ibid. 293: 'Io, come vuole Amor, che mi trasforme, / mi vesto ad hor ad hor novi sembianti'; the comment: 'tanto è forte l'imaginatione'. The sonnet in question is 'Riede la stagion lieta; e'n varie forme'. Tasso describes the subject as follows: 'Nel ritorno del Carnevale, assomiglia le sue imaginationi a le maschere' (ibid. 292).

40 Ibid. 1. Again, I follow Wickert's translation in Tasso, *Love Poems* 3.

True love, Tasso declared in his comment, was a most noble 'habito' characterized by constancy rather than the obstinacy of concupiscence—a constancy, as Thomas had taught, that had a moral good as its object. The target of the implied critique was court culture: the places 'where decency is honored,' Tasso explained in his annotation, were 'the courts of excellent princes'.⁴¹ The poem's consequent call for control over love's temptations—'ritolgano ad Amor de l'alme il freno'—is the key for understanding Tasso's programmatic goal in placing this sonnet first in his new collection. The subject description he added made the point explicitly:

This first sonnet is almost the thesis (*propositione*) of the [whole] work: in it, the poet says he deserves praise for having quickly repented his idle pursuits, and he exhorts lovers with his example to take back control over themselves from Amor.⁴²

Repentance and self-control—this message is the opposite of that suggested in Della Casa's sonnet with which we started. As Tasso considered his legacy, he appeared resolved to gird himself for the good Christian fight against love's dark power—the *atra voluptas*—and its treacherous hold on the imagination.

Theological Views of Hereos

Tasso's poetry, and particularly his own reading of it, suggest that the problems of courtly love and the imagination could be viewed through a scholastic-theological lens as much as a medical or Neoplatonic one. How common was this perspective during the Counter-Reformation? And can it be related to the ways in which contemporary works of moral edification presented these themes? These are complex questions. In what follows I suggest some tentative answers based on a necessarily limited sampling of late-medieval and early-modern theological works available in print during the Counter-Reformation. I have searched for discussions of love—particularly, of *amor hereos*—and the role attributed in this context to the imagination. My provisional conclusion is that

41 Ibid. 3: 'ne l'amor concupiscibile non può esser costanza, ma ostinatione. Ma l'amore, il quale è habito nobilissimo de la volontà, come dice S. Tomaso ne l'operette, è costante nel ben che si propone per oggetto'. He explains the phrase 'ove honestà s'honori' as 'ne le corti de gli ottimi Principi'. On Thomas' notions of *habitus* and love, see Miner R., *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions* (Cambridge: 2009).

42 Ibid. 1: 'questo primo Sonetto è quasi propositione de l'opera, ne la quale il Poeta dice di meritar lode d'essersi pentito tosto del suo vaneggiare, et esorta gli amanti co'l suo essemplio, che ritolgano ad Amore la signoria de se medesimi'.

these discourses on many points overlapped with medical reflections on love-sickness, even while their purpose and interpretive framework differed.

Churchmen who cited *amor hereos* generally recognized it as a medical concept, but nevertheless equated it with a theological notion of sexual desire. The late-medieval Netherlandish spiritual authority, Dionysius the Carthusian (1402–1471), made the equivalence explicit in a Pentecost sermon for monks. The subject was divine love:

Ecstatic love comes in two kinds, namely spiritual and carnal. The latter is also called *amor hereos* by medical doctors: it is characterized by enormous desire, an excess of concupiscence, and troubled thoughts. We may recognize ecstatic spiritual [love] in others by realizing that the first sign of ecstatic carnal love is that lovers have many thoughts in the absence [of the beloved], but in their presence say little, and do so haltingly.⁴³

Remarkably, the symptoms of carnal love thus offered a diagnostic tool to detect spiritual love. The same clinical description (and a similar comparison with divine love) recurred in Dionysius' *De perfecto mundi contemptu*, where he noted that,

an overpowering carnal love (which is called *amor hereos*) makes lovers anxiously intent on the consideration and the love of their beloved, continuously aware of them, intimately pondering every detail, rejoicing in their presence, but depressed about their absence or departure; and they always desire to be united with them and enjoy them, take pleasure in their sight, hug and kiss them; and never are they bored by it, for the time spent in such pursuits always appears short.⁴⁴

43 Carthusianus Dionysius, *Epistolarum ac Evangeliorum de Sanctis, per totum anni circulum Enarratio, cum varijs tam ad plebem, quam ad religiosos, homilijs ac sermonibus, nemini non vehementer excolendis, ac per totam Dei Ecclesiam fideliter disseminadis. Pars altera de Sanctis* (Coloniae, Petrus Quentel: 1537) 251r [erroneous for fol. 254]: 'Est autem amor extaticus duplex, scilicet spiritalis et carnalis, qui etiam amor hereos a medicis appellatur: estque ingens desiderium concupiscentia nimia, et cogitationum afflictione. Ut autem spiritem extaticum per alios cognoscamus pensandum quod primum signum amoris carnalis extatici est quod amorosi in absentia multa concipiunt, sed praesentes pauca loquuntur, defectueque proferunt'.

44 Carthusianus Dionysius, *De perfecto mundi contemptu libelli VII* (found in several collections, incl. Lugduni, Apud heredes Iacob Iunctae: 1570) 449: 'Denique sicut amor carnalis praedominans (qui amor hereos appellatur) facit amantem considerationi et amori amati graviter intentum, eiusque iugiter memorem singula quaeque intime cogitantem omnia

From here it was only a short step to the association of *amor hereos* with one of the capital sins—lust. The connection is evident in the way the Catalan physician and misogynist poet Jaume Roig (d. 1478) defined *hereos* as ‘bestial furia de gran luxuria’.⁴⁵ In turn, theological definitions of lechery shared basic elements of *amor hereos*. This included the recognition that it was a mental condition. In an influential passage of *De Civitate Dei*, St. Augustine had insisted that *luxuria* did not spring from the alluring beauty of bodies, but was the disorder of a soul lacking the self-control to redirect its attraction to spiritual objects:

Again, luxury is not the fault of beautiful and pleasant bodies, but of the soul that loves bodily pleasures perversely and therefore neglects that temperance by which we are diverted towards objects more beautiful in their spirituality, and more delightful because they cannot perish.⁴⁶

This definition recurred regularly in late medieval sources, including the *Fasciculus morum*, a fourteenth-century moral Franciscan compendium for preachers, and an often reprinted incunabulum, entitled *Lumen animae*, attributed (incorrectly) to the Dominican Berengarius de Landora (d. 1330).⁴⁷

percurrentem, de amati praesentia hilarem, de eius absentia ac recessu moerentem, semperque cupit uniri ac frui dilecto, in eius intuitu complacentiam habet, ipsum astringit, comprimit, deosculatur, nec in his ipsis percipit moras, imo omne tempus quod in istis expenditur breve videtur’.

45 Cited in Cantavella R., “Terapèutiques de l’‘Amor hereos’ a la literatura catalana medieval”, in *Actes del Novè Col·loqui Internacional de Llengua i Literatura Catalanes. Alacant/Elx 9–14 de setembre de 1991*, 2 vols. (Barcelona: 1993), II, 191–207, at 201; more elaborately in Solomon M., *The Literature of Misogyny in Medieval Spain: The Arcipreste de Talavera and the Spill* (Cambridge: 1997) 118; and in Dangler J., *Mediating Fictions: Literature, Women Healers, and the Go-between in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia* (Lewisburg, PA – London: 2001) 77. The ‘connexió hereos / luxúria en clau moral’ is also emphasized by Guixeras D., “L’amor hereos segons la Glossa al *Viaticum* de Gil de Santarém (Arxiu Capítular de la Catedral de Girona, ms. 75)”, in Rafanell A. – Balsalobre P. (eds.), *Estudis de Filologia Catalana. Dote anys de l’Institut de Llengua i cultura Catalana secció Francesc Eiximenis* (Barcelona: 1999) 129–151, at 140.

46 Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XII, cap. 8. Latin text in the Loeb edition, *The City of God against the Pagans*, trans. P. Levine, 7 vols. (Cambridge, MA – London, 1966) IV, 36. The translation cited here (slightly revised) is in Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, trans. R.W. Dyson (Cambridge: 1998) 509. For a discussion of Augustine’s understanding of lust as the foundation of medieval views, see Payer P.J., *The Bridling of Desire: Views of Sex in the Later Middle Ages* (Toronto – Buffalo – London: 1993) 54–56.

47 Wenzel S. (ed.), *Fasciculus Morum: A Fourteenth-Century Preacher’s Handbook* (College Park, PA: 1989) 648; the Augustine quote is cited in Lombardi E., *Wings of the Doves*:

It was only to be expected that the notion of lust as a corruption of the soul should be developed according to the principles of faculty psychology, including the working of sense and imagination.⁴⁸ Yet it remains noteworthy that *amor hereos* was regularly cited in theological texts interested in explaining sensory deception—the problem (as we have seen) identified by Severino and other medical doctors as central to the condition. The normal process of perception, in which the imagination functioned as ‘a kind of treasury of forms received by the senses’, could be disrupted if sensible species were somehow “planted” there: then the subject would see, hear, taste, or smell something that was not there. God had the power to do so.⁴⁹ This was how the Spanish theologian Alonso Tostado (d. 1455) explained an Old Testament passage (2 Kings 7:6) in which Aramaean troops fled at the non-existent sounds of an approaching army. Yet, Tostado noted, such deception could also be provoked by demons or occur naturally, as was the case with *amor hereos* or similar violent emotions. Demonic influences were an obvious theme in witchcraft literature.⁵⁰ The infamous *Malleus maleficarum* suggested that demons could move humans to love or hate by acting on the ‘mechanism of perception—that is, the faculty conserving the species appearing in fantasies—so suddenly as if the sensitive mechanism were just then changed by external objects’. Thus the Devil

Love and Desire in Dante and Medieval Culture (Montreal – Kingston, ON: 2012) 53–54. Berengarius de Landora, *Liber moralitatum elegantissimus magnarum rerum naturalium Lumen animae dictus*, ed. Matthias Farinator (Augsburg, Günther Zainer: December 31, 1477) fol. 303r (copy of Technische Universität Darmstadt, consulted online at <http://tudigit.ulb.tu-darmstadt.de/show/inc-iv-400/0176>, June 12, 2016); on the attribution, see the British Library *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* (online at <http://istc.bl.uk/search/record.html?istc=ib00341700>, consulted June 12, 2016).

- 48 Casagrande C. – Vecchio S., *I vizi capitali. Storia dei peccati nel Medioevo* (Turin: 2000) 157–176. On scholastic understandings of the imagination, see Wood R., “Imagination and Experience in the Sensory Soul and Beyond: Richard Rufus, Roger Bacon & Their Contemporaries”, in Lagerlund H. (ed.), *Forming the Mind: Essays on the Internal Senses and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment* (Dordrecht: 2007) 27–57; Gavrilyuk P.L. – Coakley S. (eds.), *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Christianity* (Cambridge: 2012) 212–213 and passim.
- 49 See, also for what follows: Tostado Ribera Alfonso, *Commentaria in Lib. IIII Regum, mendis nunc sane quamplurimis diligenter expurgata* (Venetiis, apud Io. Baptistam et Io. Bernardum Sessam fratres: 1596), fol. 78r–v; the quote reads: ‘thesaurus quidam formarum per sensus acceptarum’.
- 50 The indispensable guide to what follows remains Clark S., *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: 1999); see further Beecher D., “Witches, the Possessed, and the Diseases of the Imagination”, in Haskell, *Diseases of the Imagination* 103–138.

could ‘invisibly incite humans to sin, not only through persuasion ... but by disposition’.⁵¹ During the Counter-Reformation, the influential Milanese demonologist Francesco Maria Guazzo (ca. 1570–after 1623) considered the role of the imagination in diabolical phenomena so great that he opened his influential treatise *Compendium maleficarum* (1608) with a discussion of its powers, citing Tostado as one of his sources. Further on, he confirmed the latter’s view that the Devil could cause melancholy not only by provoking humoral disturbances, blindness, or deafness, but by attacking the imagination: ‘Often, moreover, to induce hate, love, and other mental disturbances, he moves images and lodges them firmly in the imagination’.⁵²

In short, the conditions associated by medical authors with *amor hereos* could imperceptibly blend in with moral-theological interpretations. The influential *Ars magna* by Ramon Llull (d. ca. 1315), which continued to be printed into the early modern period, captures the contiguity particularly well:

Lust is a mendacious disposition (*habitus mendax*), since what begins with beauty ends in indecency; and [the sinner] considers good what is evil.... Lust begins with the sensitive faculty, whose effects are multiplied by the imagination until reason is infested by sin. The object of lust affects the sensitive faculty. The latter in turn affects its object; it does so by way of the imagination, to the point where sin has perverted reason.⁵³

51 Sprenger Jacob, *Malleus maleficarum in tres divisus partes ...* (Venetiis, apud Io. Antonium Bertanum: 1574) 82, 84: ‘principium apprehensivum, id est, potentiam conservatoriam specierum quod apparent in fantasiis ita recenter ac si tunc principium sensitivum a rebus ipsis exterioribus recenter immutaretur’.

52 Guazzo Francesco Maria, *Compendium maleficarum* (Mediolani, ex collegii Ambrosiani typographia: 1626) 1–2, 186 (the last passage is cited also by Clark, *Thinking with Demons* 187; my translation is slightly different). For further examples and discussion of the Aristotelian-scholastic explanations of such demonic powers, see Stephens W., *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: 2002) 291–296 and 360–364.

53 Lullus Raymundus, *Ars magna generalis et ultima* (Francofurti, typis Ioan. Saurii: 1596) 297–298. The passage reads *in extenso*: ‘Luxuria pervertit intellectum ad credendum quod ipsa non sit peccatum. [...] Luxuria ratione pulchritudinis faciei mulieris filo capit luxuriosum ad amandum turpitudines et foetores inferiores quos mulier habet in se. Et homo multum filo captus per luxuriam credit se esse multum virtuosum. Et de tali credulitate multum miratur intellectus. Luxuria est habitus mendax, eo quod incipit cum pulchritudine et quiescit in turpitudine. Et hoc quod est malum, habet ipsum pro bono. Luxuriosus per delectationem quam habet in videndo, audiendo, imaginando et cogitando, et tangendo, in via amittit gloriam paradisi, et acquirit poenas sempiternas omnibus suis potentiis in inferno. Luxuriosus non distinguit inter turpitudines et pulchritudines mulieris. [...] Luxuria incipit cum sensitiva, et multiplicat causatum cum imaginativa, usquequo in

Vision, imagination, reason: these were precisely the terms with which medical doctors—at least those who did not privilege a humoral explanation—explained the onset of *amor hereos*. What is more, in both instances the intellective apparatus was thought to be led astray—in the lovesick, because of the pathological deception of the imagination (*corruptio virtutis imaginativae*); in the lecherous, as Llull showed, because of moral corruption of the entire process of perception.

The Imagination in Counter-Reformation Spirituality

This outlook persists unabated in Counter-Reformation spirituality. If anything, we have reason to suspect a stronger emphasis on the imagination. The work of a seminal moralist like the Dominican friar Luis de Granada is revealing. In his classic *Guía de pecadores* (1556), Granada followed Augustine in defining lust as a ‘disordered appetite for filthy, indecent pleasures’—‘one of the most general, common, and furious in existence’.⁵⁴ It was treacherous (*fallace*): its beginnings were sweet, but its end most bitter. Entrance was simple, exit most difficult, for this sin engendered a host of other moral offenses as well.⁵⁵ The condition had physical as well as psychological effects:

[this sin] weakens one’s energies, deadens beauty, deprives [the person] from a good disposition, damages health, and causes endless illnesses ... it destroys the power of the mind, renders a subtle intellect crass, and makes humans similar to animals ... It makes the young mad and infamous, and the old abominable and miserable ...’⁵⁶

ratiocinativa sit peccatum. Finis luxuriae influit sensitive et sensitiva refluat fini. Et hoc mediante imaginativa, usquequo in perversa ratiocinativa peccatum est’.

54 Given my focus on Italy, I have cited the Italian translation: Luigi di Granata [Luis de Granada], *Della Guida, overo scorta de’ peccatori Libro Primo* [—*Secondo*] (In Venetia, Giorgio Angelieri: 1582), *Libro Secondo*, fol. 13v: ‘Lussuria è appetito disordinato di delectationi sporche, & dishoneste. Questo è uno de i vitii più generali, più comuni, e più furiosi nel commettere, che siano [...]’.

55 Luigi di Granata, *Della guida, overo scorta, Libro Primo*, fols. 14r and 131v.

56 Ibid., *Libro Secondo*, fol. 14r: ‘Oltre ciò indebolisce le forze, mortifica la bellezza, priva della buona dispositione, fa danno alla sanità, parturisce infinite malattie, le quali sono molto sporche, et molto brutte, leva la bellezza, et fiore del tempo, non lascia goder del fiore della gioventù, et più a buon’hora fa venire l’inferma vecchiezza; leva la forza dell’ingegno, ingrossa la sottigliezza dell’intelletto, et fa diventar l’huomo simile a gli animali bruti [...]. Fa i giovani pazzi, et infami, et ivecchi abominevoli et miserabili [...]’.

This diagnosis suggests obvious similarities with *amor hereos*—particularly, the madness and anguish of a mind racked by desire—but there are differences as well. Whereas medical discourses on lovesickness focused on frustrated love and its psychological effects, Granada assumed that his sinful subjects satisfied their desires. In fact, his warnings concerned not only the effects on the soul but also the social fallout arising from adultery, pregnancy, and other ramifications of the sin. This part of the argument went beyond specific issues. As noted, Granada considered lust to be contagious: it triggered a cascade of other sins. He associated it especially with pride and avarice. Lust represented the tempted body; pride, the mind possessed by the Devil; and avarice, the allures of worldly matter. This unholy triad was no arbitrary construct. It was part of Granada's pointed critique of his society's affluent elites. For good reason, he argued, Christ selected most of his disciples among the poor. Then he asked:

How will a rich man save himself if he is eager for popular approval and the mortal fame of this life, which for the rich, powerful, and noble is nothing but a smelly vase of sins, full of pride, lust, and avarice?

In other words, the lecherous had a social profile similar to that long associated with the victims of *amor hereos*. They were the privileged males with the resources and power of the ruling elite.

The comparison becomes even more compelling as we move from this sin's external features to its inner mechanics. To explain the latter Granada, not surprisingly for a Dominican, turned to scholastic faculty psychology. His account relied on the same conceptual threesome used by Ramon Llull: sensation—imagination—reason. Among the senses vision came first, the eyes being 'like a great door, through which all vanities enter our soul'. This was particularly important for practitioners of prayer and meditation: their chastity was at risk when 'the images of things which enter by these doors into us leave many figures impressed in our soul, which then molest it [...] and cause it not to think of anything but what it is facing'.⁵⁷

57 *Della guida, overo scorto, Libro Secondo*, fol. 36r (chap. "Della custodia de i sensi"): '[...] conviene riformare ancora gli sensi d'esso corpo, nella qual cosa bisogna, che gli servi di Dio habbiamo grande avvertimento, et massimamente ne gl'occhi, che sono come una grande porta, per i quali [*erroneous for*: la quale] passano tutte le vanitadi, ch'entrano nelle anime nostre, & molte volte sogliono esser balconi di perdizione, per i quali entra la morte; et spetialmente le persone date all'oratione tengono particolarmente bisogno d'havere gran guardia in questo senso del vedere, et per conservare la castità, et per haver raccolto il cuore, perchè altrimenti le imagini delle cose, che entrano per queste

From the senses Granada moved inward to the passions (or appetites). He first distinguished the sensitive and rational appetites, the sensitive one unsurprisingly being 'less worthy'—since it was shared by all animals—and most dangerous. It included 'all desires and natural inclinations', including love and hate, joy and sadness, desire and fear. It was this appetite that pulled men down to earth rather than pushing them upwards to heaven. Granada called it the 'vessel and fount of all ills in this world' and, switching metaphors, the principal moral battlefield, the garden or vineyard to be tended and cultivated, and the soul's Eve—that is, its weakest part—next to its Adam—that is, its rational faculty.⁵⁸ This last metaphor, of course, confirms the gendered subtext of our entire discussion.

Two further appetites, connected to cognition, mirrored the sensitive-rational pairing: imagination and intellect. The imagination corresponded with the sensitive appetite, in that it was inferior to its partner (intellect) and in need of its direction: it was 'very disordered: because of sin it does not want to remain subject to reason'.⁵⁹ It resembled (in another string of metaphors) a fugitive slave, an untamed beast fleeing from hill to hill, a ravenous dog, a spoiled child acquiring bad habits. Uncontrolled, the imagination could not 'be quiet in the consideration of divine things'. What was needed, then, was 'great discretion and prudence' in deciding 'which thoughts to admit and which to exclude'. The risk was to grant admission to 'things which not only

porte in noi, lasciano nell'anima dipinte molte figure le quali la molestano quando si dà all'oratione, o alla meditatione, et fanno che non pensi in altro, che in quello che hanno davanti'.

- 58 Ibid., fol. 37r–v (chap. "Della mortificatione delle affettioni"): 'Et prima s'offerisce l'appetito sensitivo, il quale abbraccia tutti i desiderii et naturali movimenti, come sono amore, odio, allegrezza, mestitia, desiderio, timore, speranza, sdegno, et altre simili affettioni. Questo appetito è la parte men degna dell'anima nostra, ilche ne fa piu simili alle bestie, lequali in tutto, et per tutto si reggono per questa affettione dell'appetito. Questo è quello che più n'avilisce, et più ne tira alle cose terrene, et allontana dalle cose del cielo. Questa è la vena, et la fontana di tutti i mali, che sono nel mondo, et è quella che causa la nostra perdizione [...]. Questa è a noi un'altra Eva, che è la parte più debole, et più inchinata alle basse cose dell'anima nostra, per laquale l'antico serpente assalta il nostro Adamo, cioè la parte superiore dell'anima, dove è l'intelletto e la volontà, acciochè voglia voltar gli occhi nell'arbore vietata'.
- 59 *Libro Secondo*, fol. 39r (chap. "Della riforma dell'imaginatione"): 'L'imaginatione (ch'è la manco nobile di queste due) è una potenza dell'anima nostra, lequali più disordinate sono rimaste [*erroneous for*: la quale molto disordinata è rimasta] per il peccato, et che manco vogli restare soggetta alla ragione'.

take away devotion and charitable fervor, but charity itself, in which the life of the soul consists'.⁶⁰

Underlying Granada's seminal discussion of vision and the imagination are four assumptions. First, whereas his indictment of lust privileged its social characteristics, here Granada focused on the power of images and the frailty of the imagination when left to its own devices. Granada was thinking especially of those given to prayer and meditation—his book's audience. But the point underscores the similarity of his concern with that of medical diagnoses of *amor hereos*: in both cases an unchecked imagination spelled trouble. This suggests the second assumption: Granada's spiritual guidebook rested on the premise that the imagination could and should be contained. This disciplinary endeavor involved the operation of the external senses, the ways in which perceptions interacted with the will, and the mechanism by which these perceptions were processed by the imagination. Third, unexpressed here but critically important was the idea that the same perceptual apparatus could be redirected towards alternative, preferable objects of devotion. As Walter Melion has shown, in his *Libro de la oración y meditación* (1554) Granada pursued this possibility in the context of meditative practice, no doubt influenced by the Jesuit *Spiritual Exercises*.⁶¹ Fourth, Granada's point about charity indicates the ultimate stakes of his project, the defeat of carnal love as a precondition for the pursuit of divine love. In his view the two were of course stark opposites, but their psychological manifestations also had similarities, as when exercises of spiritual union took on obsessive forms akin to lovesickness. This is not the place to develop this further parallelism between religious and medical phenomena. Suffice it to say that the great Robert Burton already recognized 'religious melancholy' as a form of love melancholy in its own right. His insight was still rudimentary: 'I have no patterne to followe as in some of the rest, no man to imitate. No Physitian hath as yet distinctly written of it as of the other,

60 *Libro Segundo* 39r–v: 'Perilche dal nostro canto si dee tenere grande discrezione, e voglia, per esaminare, quali pensamenti dobbiamo ammettere, e quali escludere: accioche gl'uni siano ricevuti come amici, e gli altri siano ributtati come nemici. Et quelli, che in questo sono negligenti, molte volte lasciano entrare nell'anima sua cose, che non solamente gli levano la divotione, et il fervore della Charità, ma anchora l'istessa Charità, nella quale consiste la vita d'essa anima'.

61 Melion W.S., *The Meditative Art: Studies in the Northern Devotional Print, 1550–1625* (Philadelphia: 2009) 265–268. For a similar reflection on the *Spiritual Exercises*, see my "Invisible Contemplation: A Paradox in the *Spiritual Exercises*", in Enenkel K.A.E. – Melion W.S. (eds.), *Meditatio—Refashioning the Self. Theory and Practice in Late Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual Culture*, Intersections. Yearbook for Early Modern Studies (Leiden – Boston: 2011) 235–256.

all acknowledge it a most notable Symptome, some a cause, but few a species or kinde'. '[B]ut some', he noted, citing recent authorities like Ercole Sassonia (d. 1607), Pieter van Foreest (d. 1597), and Felix Platter (d. 1614), 'doe not obscurely make a distinct species of it, dividing Love Melancholy into that, whose object is women; and into the other, whose object is God'.⁶²

Concluding Remarks

The authors we have examined offer glimpses of two distinct traditions of knowledge, medical and theological, that for all their differences interpreted erotic desire based on similar intellectual assumptions about the processes of vision and, particularly, imagination. These similarities were no doubt rooted in common foundations in Aristotelian-scholastic faculty psychology. Dividing these bodies of knowledge, however, were competing claims of professional authority. The latter set up a conflict that was to play out across the early modern period, as physicians and priests contended for the treatment of an array of mental afflictions—madness, melancholy, possession, visionary experiences—diagnosed alternatively as pathological or sinful, even demonic.⁶³ In the contrast between medical cures and pastoral or ritual approaches the divergent professional goals and methods were perhaps most in evidence. This is also the case for lovesickness. The scholarship of *amor hereos* has tended to focus on a simple remedy long recommended by medical doctors, going back to the Islamic tradition, as a prime example of this divergence: that is, the lovesick could rid themselves of the sexual urge by satisfying it—a prescription obviously at odds with ecclesiastical law. Some scholars have gone as far as seeing this medical cure as part of an 'art of love' with which medieval physicians carved out a space of sexual freedom in a restrictive Christian culture—a space that (as others have suggested) was reduced during the Counter-Reformation.

62 Burton R., *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, text ed. T.C. Faulkner – N.K. Kiessling – R.L. Blair, 6 vols. (Oxford: 1989–2000) III, 330–331. For an analysis of medical and religious discourse in the *Anatomy*, see Lund M.A., *Melancholy, Medicine and Religion in Early Modern England: Reading the 'Anatomy of Melancholy'* (Cambridge: 2010).

63 See on this competition the extensive literature on the history of madness and possession; recent titles include: Porter R., *Madness: A Brief History* (Oxford – New York: 2002); Lederer D., *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe: A Bavarian Beacon* (Cambridge: 2006); Sluhovsky M., *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism and Discernment in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: 2007); Haskell, *Diseases of the Imagination*; Katajala-Peltomaa S. – Niiranen S. (eds.), *Mental Disorder in Later Medieval Europe* (Leiden – Boston: 2014); and Mellyn E.W., *Mad Tuscans and Their Families: A History of Mental Disorder in Early Modern Italy* (Philadelphia: 2014).

An oft-cited example is that of the French physician Jacques Ferrand, who, in the first edition of his major treatise on lovesickness (1610), recommended that this disorder be cured by sex, while suggesting numerous aphrodisiacs and magical tricks for men to make themselves more attractive to the opposite sex. In 1620 an inquisitorial trial in Toulouse found the work guilty of offenses against public morals. The condemnation led to an expurgated version, which eliminated the chapter on love remedies and allowed only the ‘satisfaction of one’s object of desire in marriage according to divine and human laws’.⁶⁴

This act of censorship, however remarkable, is not necessarily the best measure of longer-term trends. The thesis of a growing sexual restrictiveness between the Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation may have value generally, but here tends to overlook continuities in the medical tradition, along with the great variety and complexity of opinion within it, across these time periods. Not only did medieval physicians regularly insist on the legal limits of sexual activity, but they at times also indicated religious constraints. Michele Savonarola told his medical audience: ‘you, doctor, don’t recommend this [the cure of sex] unless it has the approval of the faith and the law, as Avicenna says. And he is not even a Christian—all the more reason for you, Christian, to do so’. For Savonarola, the *eros pharmacon* was a measure of last resort, on par with whipping, if all else failed.⁶⁵

Instead, it is worth noting that the church and the medical profession often competed on common ground. The imagination was one such area, and this was certainly an area of growing interest and concern in a range of intellectual disciplines—humanist, philosophical, demonological, theological—between late medieval and early modern times.⁶⁶ At the same time, the widely

64 On sex-as-cure, see Jacquart – Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine* 116–138; Allen P.L., *The Wages of Sin: Sex and Disease, Past and Present* (Chicago: 2002) 1–24. For a more nuanced account, Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages* 66–70. The claim about the Counter-Reformation turn is made, based in part on the example of Ferrand, by Poma R., “Metamorfosi dell’*hereos*. Fonti medievali della psicofisiologia del mal d’amore in età moderna (XVI–XVII)”, *Atti/Actes Eros Pharmakon*, in *Ri.L.Un.E.*, 2, 7 (2007), online at <http://www.rilune.org/mono7/Poma.pdf> (accessed January 30, 2015), s.p. A more detailed assessment of Ferrand’s trial is offered in the introduction to Ferrand, *A Treatise on Lovesickness* 26–38.

65 Savonarola, *Practica maior*, fol. 69v: ‘Decimus completur cum coniunctione eorum, et tu medice non consulas id fieri nisi fiat secundum modum permissionis fidei, et legis, ut dicit Avicenna. Et ipse non fuit Christianus: quanto magis tu Christiane’.

66 On late medieval and Renaissance premises, see Wack M.F., “From Mental Faculties to Magical Philters: The Entry of Magic into Academic Medical Writing on Lovesickness”, in Beecher – Ciavolella, *Eros and Anteros* 9–31, esp. 14–16; and Couliano I.P., *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance* [1984], trans. M. Cook (Chicago: 1987). On early modern developments, see, among other studies, Park K., “Bacon’s ‘Enchanted Glass’”, *Isis* 75, 2 (1984) 290–302;

disseminated art of memory offered practitioners an extraordinary array of tools to control the imagination—to guide the attention to some things (inducing admiration, commiseration, horror, or other effects) and to effect forgetfulness about others. Late medieval preachers were masters in this art.⁶⁷ No doubt a devotional author of the Counter-Reformation period like Luis de Granada was aware of this tradition. Granada, as we have seen, promoted the controlled use of the imagination to combat temptation and promote spiritual advancement. On their part, doctors proposed similar tactics to alleviate the troubles of the lovesick. The example of Michele Savonarola is, again, illuminating. On the one hand, in discussing male sexual problems he advised active engagement of the senses and the imagination: ‘Men should listen to stories, songs, and other similar things which lead to love; they should look at very beautiful ladies, and imagine the sexual act at great length until they feel fortified.’⁶⁸ On the other hand, when discussing lovesickness he told patients to steer their minds away from the object of their obsession. The patient’s attention could be diverted by good or bad news, by vigorous activity, by travel or visits to beautiful sites, or by being introduced to other women. Conversely, repulsive sense impressions could serve to put him off: seeing ‘ugly old women’ naked, hearing evil rumors about his beloved (‘she is a drunken whore’), even exposure to her menstrual blood. But Savonarola’s first recommendation was for a ‘wise man,’ respected by the patient, ‘to show the world’s dangers, divine judgment, the joys of paradise, and the punishments of hell.’⁶⁹ More than a century later, the prominent Paduan physician Ercole Sassonia still deferred to such established medical opinion and, citing Lucretius, summed it up with

Clark S., *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: 2009) esp. 39–77; idem, *Thinking with Demons*, passim; Gowland A., “The Problem of Early Modern Melancholy”, *Past and Present*, 191 (2006) 70–120, at 90–96; and Haskell, *Diseases of the Imagination*.

- 67 On these themes the work of Lina Bolzoni is fundamental: see especially Bolzoni L., “The Art of Memory and the Erotic Image in 16th and 17th-Century Europe: The Example of Giovan Battista della Porta”, in Beecher – Ciavolella, *Eros and Anteros* 103–122; and *La stanza della memoria: Modelli letterari e iconografici nell’età della stampa* (Turin: 1995) 143–154; in English: *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press*, trans. J. Parzen (Toronto: 2001). On the use of mental images in late medieval preaching, see eadem, *La rete delle immagini. Predicazione in volgare dalle origini a Bernardino da Siena* (Turin: 2002).
- 68 Savonarola, *Practica maior*, fol. 259r (‘Pro quinto audiantur fabulae, cantus, et similis quae ad amorem trahunt, et ad aspectus dominarum pulcherrimarum, imaginatio[nem] ad coitum, et prolongetur donec confortetur’); translation in Jacquart – Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine* 133.
- 69 Ibid. fol. 69v.

the recommendation that lovers ‘turn their mind elsewhere’ (*‘alio convertere mentem’*).⁷⁰

Both physicians and theologians thus saw the imagination as a liability as well as a resource in their engagement with erotic desire. Supported by the art of memory they agreed, not so much on their sexual ethics, as on the need to exploit the imagination’s power in the pursuit of their goals—therapeutic or moral. This understanding no doubt pervaded the larger culture, even as specific forms and interpretations might differ and change. It was certainly a key assumption underpinning the ways in which many lyric poems, such as those by Della Casa and Tasso, were written and/or read—as pictures of love’s haunting imaginings.

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The Gods of Water—Baths, Country Houses, and Their Decoration in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Flanders

Ursula Härting

Today's preoccupation with wellness has meant that the focus of bathrooms has shifted from simple rooms devoted to personal hygiene to aesthetically conceived environments designed to encourage relaxation and enjoyment. Yet this is by no means a modern phenomenon, but one which, in Europe at least, has its roots in the *thermae*, the large baths of ancient Rome used by ordinary citizens. More privileged members of society had private baths, often of considerable size, as evident from Pliny's (61/62–ca. 114) description of his country retreat, which boasted five rooms devoted to different saunas and hot and cold baths with adjacent resting areas.¹ Bathing was always considered a pleasurable way of engaging in *otium*, the Latin word denoting leisure. Public bathhouses in early-modern times could be segregated according to the sexes, but mixed bathing was also allowed, earning bathhouses the reputation of being places of disrepute, where visitors engaged in immoral sexual conduct and decadent behaviour.² The following study will examine how the popularity of private bathing facilities among Europe's elite gave rise to the demand for and creation of a new form of erotic and eroticising decoration.³

While early Renaissance architectural treatises only briefly refer, if at all, to private bathing complexes,⁴ Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439–1501/02)

* Grateful thanks are due to Dagmar Eichberger, Joanna Woodall and Fiona Healy, who also translated my text, for their many contributions.

1 Pliny, *Delphi Complete Works of Pliny the Younger*, trans. J.B. Firth, books 1–v (Delphi Classics, Hastings, East Sussex, UK: 2014), vol. 28, Letter to Domitio Apollinari ... (2,17); to Gallus (5,6).

2 Wolfthal D., *In and Out Of The Marital Bed, Seeing Sex In Renaissance Europe* (New Haven–London: 2010) 121.

3 Cf. Scaillièrez C., *Le bain et le miroir: soins du corps et cosmétiques de L'Antiquité à la Renaissance* [exh. cat., Musée de Cluny, Paris; Musée National de la Renaissance Ecouen, Ecouen] (Paris: 2009) 64–66. 'Le bain, lieu de nudité et métaphore du plaisir érotique' (the bath is a place of nudity and a metaphor for erotic enjoyment).

4 Cf. the many texts, especially on *Villegiatura* (rural retreat; see below), by Ugolino de Montecatini (1345–1425), Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), Giuliano da Sangallo (ca. 1443–1516) and Filarete (ca. 1400–ca. 1469).

included a detailed account in his treatise of the early 1480s, which was published in Italian and so accessible to a wider audience.⁵ He obviously studied the ruins of ancient *thermae*, as one of his drawings shows the ground plan of part of the extensive complex of baths built by the emperor Hadrian (117–138) in his villa at Tivoli.⁶ Through his patron, Duke Federico da Montefeltro (1522–1582), who had his own bathing facilities in his palazzo in Urbino, Di Giorgio had access to the works of ancient authors and especially the writings of Vitruvius, which were particularly influential; on the basis of these texts, Di Giorgio was able to establish the correct terminology for the various rooms and their functions: one undressed in the *spoliatum* or *apodyterion*, while the sauna was called *stufa* or *stufetta*; the floor and walls of the *hypocaustum* were heated; the *sudazioni col tepidario* were steam baths with a lukewarm resting room whereas the *frigidarium* contained a pool of cold water. If one had no separate resting area, one retired to the bedroom. This enfilade or succession of rooms catered to all needs and desires, from basic hygiene, to relaxation and perhaps even erotic activities. The term *stufa/stufetta* emerged as the generic name for bathing facilities conceived to provide the owner and his guests with enjoyment of every sort.⁷ The experience was not just about cleanliness, but also about eating together, conversing and playing games,—and sexual fulfilment, or at the very least an amorous adventure.⁸

Rome's Castel Sant'Angelo still retains its Renaissance bathhouse, installed by Pope Clement VII around 1527,⁹ and described by Vasari 1568 as 'una stufa

5 Giorgio Martini F. di, *Trattati di architettura ingegneria e arte militare, 1480–1485*, ed. and trans. L. Maltese Degrossi (Milan: 1967). My study is indebted to Waarts L.L., *Badkamers voor Pausen en Prelaten, Leven en welzijn aan het Vaticaanse hof in de renaissance* (Delft: 2014); here Waarts, *Badkamers* 110–113.

6 Hadrian's Villa was also studied by Raphael. For a list of ancient baths, see Waarts, *Badkamers*, 112, n. 898.

7 The bathing facilities installed by Cardinal Guiliano della Rovere (1443–1513), the future Pope Julius II, in his castle in Ostia and Pope Clement VII (1478–1534) in Castel Sant'Angelo show how quickly contemporary architecture was influenced by Di Giorgio's ideas.

8 The layout was geared for optimal efficiency by locating the kitchens next to the warm areas of the baths.

9 The floor and walls of the bathing room in Castel Sant'Angelo of his predecessor, Julius II, 1504, were heated by circulating warm air. According to Vitruvius Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, *Vitruvii De architectura libri decem = Zehn Bücher über Architektur*, trans. and with notes by C. Fensterbusch (Darmstadt: 1996) v 10, 1, containers for cold water and bronze boilers for heating hot and lukewarm water were stored in a room (*prae-furnium*) adjoining the warm room (*tepidarium*). Cf. Waarts, *Badkamers* 112.

bellissima'—a most beautiful bath [Fig. 2.1].¹⁰ Its *Stufa*,¹¹ a small, comparatively narrow room, contains a bath which was filled with warm water fed through pipes from a neighbouring room. Rounded niches, a feature typical of sixteenth-century baths, provided comfortable resting places after bathing and before entering the sauna, or to hold towels or other utensils.

The frescoes on the walls by Giovanni da Udine, one of Raphael's assistants, show grotesques and mythological scenes. Some depict the amorous adventures of the ancient gods, often in amusing or compromising situations, as when Vulcan, Venus's husband, is shown entering her bedroom just as Mars, her lover, leaves by the other door [Fig. 2.2]. Others relate to the function of the room by showing scenes involving water: Venus and Amor sitting by a stream; two nymphs with children by a pool [Fig. 2.3]. Seven painted thrones allude to the presence of the Olympian gods who prior to entering the bath have deposited their drapery and attributes—Mercury his winged cap and caduceus [Fig. 2.4], Apollo his lyre and bow-and-arrow, Jupiter his helmet and sceptre.¹² That Venus, the goddess of love, enjoyed such a prominent role in the baths of church dignitaries is not as surprising as one might think given that some medical doctors considered sexual pursuits as 'medically' beneficial, since such physically engaging activities were thought to ease tensions and create a physical and mental state of well-being which in turn generated the state of physiological and psychological balance considered essential for men in positions of power.¹³

Country Houses (*villeggiatura*)

The following will focus on the decoration of baths in country retreats. From the sixteenth century, the Italian tradition of retiring to the countryside (*villeggiatura*) became widespread throughout Europe. The benefits of clean

10 As cited by Schlink W., *Tizian—Leben und Werk* (Munich: 2008) 103.

11 Waarts, *Badkamers* 273–286, figs. 107–120.

12 Waarts, *Badkamers* 280, fig. 120. A similar idea in Jan Gossart's so-called *Venus of Rovigo*, see below 72.

13 Waarts, *Badkamers* 123 ff. Pope Alexander VI (1431–1503) was criticized for conducting his sexual activities in public. According to his biographer Gerard Geldenhouwer (1482–1542), Philip of Burgundy is said to have viewed chastity as an intolerable burden, see Ainsworth M.W. (ed.), *Man, Myth, and Sensual Pleasures. Jan Gossart's Renaissance. The Complete Works* [exh. cat., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York] (New Haven – London: 2010) 65. For Geldenhouwer's biography, see Mensger A., *Jan Gossaert, Die niederländische Kunst zu Beginn der Neuzeit* (Berlin: 2002), 80.



FIGURE 2.1 *Bathroom/Stufa of Pope Clement VII. Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome. Wikimedia Commons. File: Engelsburg la stufa.jpg.*

PHOTO: JASTROW (2003).



FIGURE 2.2 *Giovanni da Udine* (1487–1564), *Venus with Vulcanus and Mars*. Fresco. *Bathroom/Stufa of Pope Clement VII*.

© LENY LOUISE WAARTS, *BADKAMERS VOOR PAUSEN EN PRELATEN* (DELFT: 2014), FIG. 116. <http://www.iconos.it/le-metamorfosi-di-ovidio/libro-iv/marte-venere-e-vulcano/immagini/37-marte-venere-e-vulcano/>.



FIGURE 2.3 *Nymphs*. Fresco. *Bathroom/Stufa of Pope Clement VII*.

© LENY LOUISE WAARTS, *BADKAMERS VOOR PAUSEN EN PRELATEN* (DELFT: 2014), FIG. 118.



FIGURE 2.4
 Giovanni da Udine (1487–1564),
 Throne (Mercury). Fresco.
 Bathroom/Stufa of Pope Clement
 VII. Wikimedia Commons. File:
 Giovanni da Udine—Decoration of
 the Stufetta—WGA09433.jpg.

country air on health were recognised already by Pliny¹⁴ and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were the topics of treatises by doctors, natural philosophers and architects.¹⁵ Leon Battista Alberti's (1404–1472) guidelines on bathing and relaxation in a villa suburbana included the recommendation to rest in the garden or in bed after bathing,¹⁶ while shortly before 1547 Sebastiano Serlio published a treatise on the bathing facilities in French chateaux, most of which were royal residences, and as such represented state-of-the-art modernity and the height of luxury.¹⁷

The pleasures of the countryside were also enjoyed in the Netherlands.¹⁸ In the late sixteenth century there were well over three hundred and fifty country estates in the area just around Antwerp.¹⁹ Though only comparatively few inventories of these houses have survived, we can deduce from these that they must have contained an extraordinarily large number of erotic paintings; such subjects are rarely listed in the inventories of town houses.

Three extant country house inventories document the various types of erotic and mythological paintings owned by high-ranking members of Flemish society.²⁰ The first records the collection of the Antwerp merchant, Nicolaes

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- 14 See Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) *Zehn Bücher über die Baukunst*, *Ins Deutsche übertragen, eingeleitet und mit Anmerkungen und Zeichnungen versehen durch Max Theuer* (Nachdruck Wien/Leipzig: 1912; Darmstadt: 1975) 478, on the benefits of the countryside with its clean and healthy air; also Bosse A., *Le trésor des merveilles de la maison royale de Fontainebleau ... I* (Paris, Cramoisy: 1652) chapter III: 'Du bon air et tempérament de Fontainebleau'.
 - 15 Paolo Giovio, medical advisor to Clement VII, recommended taking warm baths; see Waarts, *Badkamers* 50.
 - 16 Alberti/Theuer, *Baukunst*, citing the ancient Roman author Martial (40–102/4 n.Chr.) 479.
 - 17 Sebastiano Serlio on *Architecture*; *Tutte l'opere d'architettura* ed. and trans. V. Hart – P. Hicks, (New Haven: 2001) Book VI, 31v; Eschenfelder C.S., *Die Bäder Franz I. in Fontainebleau* (Munich: 1991) 72–73. Serlio planned at those times a bathing complex in a royal garden pavilion. Serlio arrived in France in 1541 at the invitation of François I to assist with the building of the palace of Fontainebleau, see Grandazzi J. (ed.), *Primatice, Maître de Fontainebleau, 1504–1570* [exh. cat., Musée du Louvre 2004–2005] (Paris: 2004) 23.
 - 18 See Ursula Härting, "Mehr Sex auf dem Land? Dekorationsprogramme und die Erweiterung der Bildthemen in flämischer Malerei im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert", in *Rekonstruktion der Gesellschaft aus Kunst, Antwerpener Malerei und Graphik in und nach den Katastrophen des späten 16. Jahrhunderts*, Conference Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel 2011 (Petersberg: 2016) 127–145. Baetens R., "La Belezza et la Magnificenza: symbols du pouvoir de la villa rustica dans la région anversoise aux temps modernes", in *La culture de l'habitat*, Coll. Université Anvers (Turnhout: 1991) 159–177, esp. 164.
 - 19 See Härting, "Mehr Sex" 136–137.
 - 20 For more inventories of Flemish country houses, see Härting, "Mehr Sex" 135–136.

Jonghelink (1517–1570), who between 1555 and 1561 commissioned from Frans Floris a series of ten paintings illustrating *The Labours of Hercules*. The hero was in good Olympian company: a Sea-Triumph, a depiction of a Judgement of Paris and a Banquet of the Gods [Fig. 2.5], all compositions with naked figures and all provided Jonghelink and his guests with the opportunity to enjoy and discuss their artistic merits as well as possible lascivious, moral or amoral content,²¹ in a day when mythological nudes in artwork were still new experiences.

The second inventory is that of the aristocratic Charles de Croÿ (1560–1612), Duke of Arenberg, whose collection of so-called ‘nudités’ (naked figures) in his rural retreat, Castle Beaumont, included a Leda and the Swan, a sleeping Venus with Cupid, a Judgement of Paris, two depictions of Mars and Venus,²² a Diana and Actaeon,²³ Venus cradling her dead lover, Adonis, and, rather unexpectedly, Adam and Eve, which, though a biblical story, by its very nature exudes a sense of lasciviousness. Here eroticism lies both in the narrative and the nudity.²⁴

The third inventory documents the contents of *Crauwels*, the country house belonging to Michiel van der Heyden (1511–1549) in Berchem, on the outskirts of Antwerp.²⁵ One of its most important rooms contained 24 chairs and various

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- 21 For the provenance of the Banquet of the Gods, see Härting, “Mehr Sex” n. 80 and 81. On the series of *Hercules*, executed between 1555 and 1561, see Velde C. van de, *Frans Floris (1519/20–1570). Leven en werken*, 2 vols. (Brussels: 1975) 261. For the inventory at ter Beken, see *ibid.* 454.
 - 22 Inventaire Croÿ = Charles de Croÿ’s Inventaire de tableaux (1613), *Archives des arts, sciences et lettres*, Gent: 1860 (Brussels: 1994) 158–173, here No. 79: ‘Mars, Vénus et Cupido couchés ensemble, les aultres dieux les regardans, (sur thoille)’ and the same subject, but with the net which held the adultrous couple captive, under Inventaire Croÿ No. 83: ‘les dieux ... prenans au filet.’ On the erotic effect of the many love scenes involving Venus, see Healy F., “Die Venus in der niederländischen Kunst des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts”, in *Venus, Bilder einer Göttin* [exh. cat., Alte Pinakothek, Munich] (Munich: 2001) 51–72.
 - 23 Inventaire Croÿ No. 84: ‘Le bain de Vénus avecq les aultres déesses, Actéon les y trouvant se transformant en cerf’ (lost). Velde, *Floris*, cat. 164, ill. 88, panel, 170 × 257cm.
 - 24 Inventaire Croÿ No. 74: ‘Adam et Eva au paradis terrestre’, 221cm high, lost; cf. Velde, *Floris*, 272, under Cat. 129. When Dürer returned from Italy in 1507 he painted the biblical lovers, life-sized, on two separate panels (Madrid, Prado); whether they ever may have decorated a Villa or flanked a chimney is unclear. See for such a hanging, *ibid.* note 26. Poeschel, *Starke Männer*, 59–60, cites Dürer himself who saw the sensuality of the couple as the ‘widererwaxung’ (reawakening) of the antique. For Gossart’s life-size *Neptune and Amphitrite* (Berlin), influenced by Dürer’s *Adam and Eve* (engraving: 1504/ painting: 1507, see fig. 14, and n. 62.
 - 25 The inventory was drawn up three years after his death; see Goldstein C.E., *Keeping Up Appearances: The Social Significance of Domestic Decoration in Antwerp, 1508–1600*, PhD



FIGURE 2.5 *Frans Floris (1515/20–1570), Banquet of the Sea Gods (1561). Panel, 126 × 226 cm. Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, Inv. NM 430.*

beds ('lits de champ') and was the room with the largest number of pictures, among which were depictions of *Adam and Eve*, *Hercules wrestling Antaeus*, *Hercules spinning* and above the fireplace a *Venus and Cupid*.²⁶

The preference in country houses for erotically charged mythological scenes, especially of lovers, is obvious. Unfortunately, the inventories of these three country houses rarely tell us what we really want to know, namely in which rooms such paintings hung. Though conjectural, there is good reason, I believe, to suppose that those subjects involving water decorated the rooms adjacent to the bathing facilities.²⁷ It is notable that while an enormous number of eroticised mythological paintings were executed in the Netherlands around 1600, especially by artists specialising in small figure painting, such as

(Columbia: 2003) 143–158. See also Antwerp Stadsarchief SAA GF50.

26 A comparably erotic connection between a painting and a chimney can also be found south of the Alps, for example in the Villa Da Porto Colleoni in Thiene where a *Venus and Vulcan* by Giovanni Antonio Fasolo (1530–1572) hung above the fireplace; see Muraro M. – Marton P., *Die Villen in Venetien* (Cologne: 1996) 131. The eroticising association is evident from the motto *Ignem in sinu ne abscondas* (Hide not the fire in your breast) which decorated the chimney of the Room of Bacchus in Alessandro Vittoria's Villa Barbaro; see Muraro, *Villen* 276.

27 For example, Raphael's *Triumph of Galatea* in the Villa Farnesina in Rome, see Grünberg U., *Potestas Amoris, Erotisch-mythologische Dekorationen um 1600 in Rom* (Petersberg: 2009) 86.

Frans Francken II, by whom more than thirty versions of *Triumph of Neptune and Amphitrite* have survived (and there must have been more), yet with rare exceptions, they are conspicuously absent from the inventories of city residences.²⁸ The obvious explanation is that such aqueous subjects must, by deduction, have hung in country houses.

There are many examples of a clear reciprocal link between the function of a room and its decoration. The Last Judgement was a favourite subject for Town Halls, where it served as a reminder that those who contravened the law would be punished; Leonardo's *Last Supper* still graces the refectory in Milan for which it was painted;²⁹ and Rubens (1577–1640) may well have executed his own *Supper at Emmaus* for the dining room of his country house, Het Steen.³⁰ Artists naturally also took inspiration from their surroundings, as did Lucas Cranach, whose *Fountain of Youth* of 1541 may well have been painted for the bathing quarters in the castle of Wittenberg (Saxony), where it would have exemplified for bathers the—quite unrealistic—hopes and desires associated with cleansing: eternal youth, the washing away of the signs of old age, even the restoration of virginity [Fig. 2.6].³¹

This effect of being simultaneously in a real and imaginary space would have been particularly strong in the stairwell of the imperial bathhouse in Regensburg, which was decorated by Albrecht Altdorfer around 1535. Visitors ascending the stairs were accompanied by fictive visitors in contemporary dress, some looking down from the balcony, others observing painted depictions of naked couples enjoying their baths—this simulated nudity prepared visitors for the real nudity they would encounter upon opening the door to the

28 Many Flemish paintings were exported to France, where luxurious seventeenth-century bathing complexes are documented, see Bouttier R., "Le Bain: masculin, féminin ou pluriel? Les bains d'Anne D'Autriche", in *Le prince, la princesse et leurs logis manières d'habiter dans l'élite aristocratique européenne (1400–1700)*, actes des septièmes Rencontres d'architecture européenne, Paris 2011 (Paris: 2014) 165–276.

29 Veronese's *Feast in the House of Levi* (1573, Venice, Accademia) was commissioned for the refectory of the Dominican monastery of San Giovanni e Paolo in Venice.

30 Madrid, Prado, Inv. 407, 143 × 156cm. Rubens bequeathed his *Supper at Emmaus* to the owner of a tavern in Brussels, see Belkin K. – Healy F., (eds.), *Een huis vol kunst, Rubens als Verzamelaar* [exh. cat., Rubenshuis & Rubenianum, Antwerpen] (Schoten: 2004) 131.

31 The baths in Wittenberg may have been begun already in 1534 and were completed by 1541, see Eschenfelder, *Bäder* 6. On Cranach, see Franke B. – Schade S., "Jungbrunnen und andere 'Erneuerungsbäder' im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert," in Enenkel K.A.E. (ed.), *Die Erfindung des Menschen: Die Autobiographik des frühneuzeitlichen Humanismus von Petrarca bis Lipsius* (Berlin: 1998) 197–212.



FIGURE 2.6 Lucas Cranach d. Ä. (1472–1553), *Fountain of Youth* (1541). Panel, 120.6 × 186.1 cm. Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Preußischer Kulturbesitz, inv. 593. PHOTO: JÖRG P. ANDERS.

actual bath.³² The stairwell proclaimed that the baths were not only concerned with physical and mental renewal, but also catered to sensual pleasures and voyeuristic lust,³³ as so pertinently illustrated in the fresco of *Actaeon spying on Diana* of ca. 1570 in the disrobing chamber in the baths of Philippine Welser (1527–1580) in the Castle of Ambras [Fig. 2.7].³⁴

32 Haupt C., “Albrecht Altdorfers ‘Kaiserbadfresken’, die Wandbildfragmente aus dem Bischofshof in Regensburg”, in Trapp E. (ed.), *Zwischen Gotik und Barock: Spuren der Renaissance in Regensburg* (Morsbach: 2012) 177–190.

33 Wolfthal, *In and Out Of The Marital Bed* 129, figs. 93–94. On brothels in public baths, see Tuchen, B., *Öffentliche Badhäuser in Deutschland und der Schweiz im Mittelalter und der frühen Neuzeit* (Petersberg: 2003) 99.

34 On the fresco, see Kiby U., *Bäder und Badekultur in Orient und Okzident* (Cologne: 1995) fig. 222, where it is falsely identified as a Fountain of Youth.



FIGURE 2.7 Actaeon and Diana. Fresco. *Bathroom of Philippine Welser, Castle of Ambras (Austria). KHM-Museumsverband, Wien.*

Raphael and the *Stufetta* of Cardinal Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena (1470–1520)³⁵

Around 1515/1516, Cardinal Bibbiena commissioned Raphael and his workshop to decorate his private *stufetta* in the Vatican [Fig. 2.8]. One of the paintings decorating the marble-clad walls shows Pan, clearly visibly excited, spying on the nymph Syrinx as she washes her hair by a stream.³⁶ This was just one of the erotic scenes the Cardinal enjoyed while luxuriating in his bath; others show mythological lovers such as Venus lying suggestively between Adonis's legs, and again scenes with aqueous and marine themes. Bibbiena's bath also

35 Cardinal Bibbiena was for a period the Vatican ambassador to the French court; he was also secretary to Leo X following the death of Julius II (1513–1521 papacy), both of whom were acquainted with Philip of Burgundy.

36 Waarts, *Badkamers* Pan fig. 53, Venus and Adonis fig. 54; Marco Dente, *Pan and Syrinx*, engraving after the fresco of 1515/16 after a design by Raphael and inspired by the *Domus Aurea*, which was discovered around 1480; see Grünberg, *Potestas* 92.

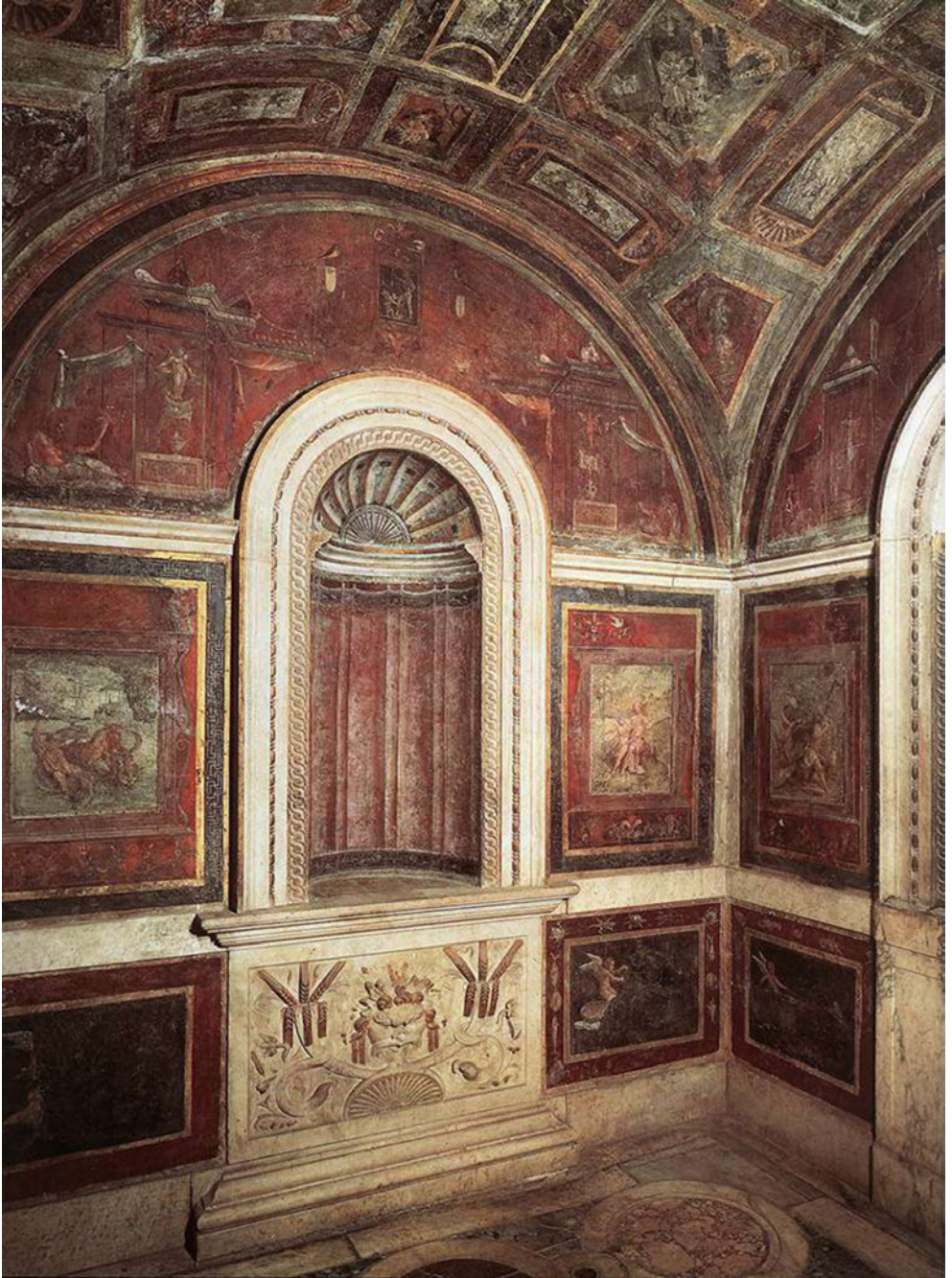


FIGURE 2.8 *Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio) (1483–1520), Stufetta del Cardinale Bibbiena, Vatican Palace (ca. 1515–1516). Scala / Art Resource, NY, ART53729. Public domain wiki: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/it/b/be/Stufetta_del_cardinal_bibbiena.jpg.*



FIGURE 2.9 Luca Cambiaso (1527–1585), Bathing Scene. Fresco. Genoa, Palazzo Pallavicino Gropallo, formerly Spinola Pessagno.

PHOTO: LUIGINO VISCONTI.

had shell niches painted by Giovanni da Udine; here fictive curtains cleverly deceive the eye.³⁷ In addition to providing convenient seats or shelves,³⁸ these niches could also be used for displaying sculpture, as nicely illustrated by Luca Cambiaso (1527–1585) [Fig. 2.9]. It is evident that niches and the depiction of amorous couples and famous lovers were part of the standard repertoire for decorating baths, both private and public.³⁹

37 Waarts, *Badkamers* shell niche, fig. 40. Hüttner G.H., *Studien zur römischen Nischenarchitektur* (Leiden: 1979) 3, fig. 3; 195. Similar shell niches decorated the baths of Alexander VI in the Borgia apartments; Waarts, *Badkamers* fig. 9; Poeschel, *Appartamento Borgia* 60 ff. On the decoration of Alexander VI's *camerae secretae*, see Kempers B. – De Blaauw S. – Weddigen T. (eds.), *Functions and Decorations. Art and Ritual at the Vatican Palace in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Turnhout: 2003) 57–70.

38 Tuchen, *Badhäuser* 134–135.

39 Eschenfelder, *Bäder* 53, argues that the Fontainebleau baths were not linked by an overriding thematic scheme. But according to my argumentation the decoration seems to have shown some of the standard subjects.



FIGURE 2.10 Hans Vredeman de Vries (1527–1604), Interior with Sunken Pool (1560). Print, 208 × 259 mm. Publisher: Hieronymus Cock, Engraver: Brothers Doetichum. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Inventar-Nr. B Geom. 2° (1–6).

This will almost certainly also have been the case north of the Alps, where the existence of bathhouses overlooking parks and gardens in Ghent, Bruges and Brussels has been established by Krista de Jonge.⁴⁰ Unfortunately nothing is known of their decoration, but an idea can be gleaned from Hans Vredeman de Vries's engraving of ca. 1560 showing a bath with a large sunken pool, a bed, a large stove, shell-headed niches and a sculpture of a kissing couple [Fig. 2.10].

40 Jonge K. de, "Estuves et baingneries dans les résidences flamandes des ducs de Bourgogne", *Bulletin monumental* 159 (2001) 63–76.

The inventory of the bathroom installed in 1528 by Philip, Duke of Cleve (1456–1528),⁴¹ Admiral of the Fleet, in his hunting lodge, the Castle van Wynendale near Bruges, lists among its furnishings mattresses, a number of beds and four bathtubs—there was apparently no piped water system. Curtains hanging from the ceiling covered the tubs and so both kept in the heat and gave opportunities to peek, to look without being seen, like Actaeon.⁴² An adjacent area of relaxation was decorated with pictures of *Diana and Actaeon* and other nude figures by unnamed artists. Among these may have been the three paintings presented to Philip by his close friend Philip of Burgundy. Maryan Ainsworth also noted that nude figures from mythology decorated the Duke of Cleve's bedroom and bathroom, and suggested the painting described as a 'beautiful woman undressed' could have been Jan Gossart's *Venus of Rovigo* [Fig. 2.11].⁴³ Though shown alone, the presence of Cupid's wings and arrows at her feet suggest the god of love was also present in the room, as indeed is her lover Mars, whose helmet also sits at her feet—this amusing motif is reminiscent of the empty thrones in Rome's Castel Sant'Angelo [Fig. 2.4]. We know that the bathroom at van Wynendale contained two paintings of nudes⁴⁴—these and the many 'femmes nues' decorating van Wynendale have given Philipp de Cleve's castle the reputation of being a precursor to the baths of Fontainebleau.⁴⁵

41 Haemers J. – Van Hoorebeeck H. – Wijsman C. (eds.), *Entre la Ville, la Noblesse Et L'Etat: Philippe de Clèves (1456–1528), Homme Politique Et Bibliophile* (Turnhout: 2007).

42 Finot J., *Inventaire sommaire des archives départementales antérieures à 1790, nord archives civiles Série B, Chambre des comptes de Lille* (Lille: 1895) vol. 8, 423–435: The bathing area ('chambre des baynneries', 'les estuves') consisted of a steam room with 'paillasses' (straw-filled mattresses), 'cuwes' (tubs), 'chalits' (bedsteads) and a lot of towels.

43 The relatively small panel painting (59 × 30cm) hangs in the Pinacoteca dell'Accademia dei Concordi, Rovigo. Ainsworth speculates that the inventory reference 'Ung autre grand tabelau de painture d'une belle fille qui se désabille, venant de feu monseigneur d'Utrecht' could mean that Philip of Burgundy gave the *Venus* to Philip of Cleve as a gift; see Ainsworth, *Man, Myth* 231. For the inventory, see Finot, *Inventaire* 423. In my opinion, however, the reference to a *large* painting precludes this provenance.

44 Finot, *Inventaire* 423 ('une grand femme nue sur toile; ung aultre tableau de painture d'ung home et une femme nus'). Other paintings like 'Mars et Vénus ... venant de feu monseigneur d'Utrecht ... Adam et Ève ...; deux tableaux de Lucress, ... Cléopatra ...', Finot, *Inventaire* 432, seem to have been sent from 'd'Enghien chaste' to Margaret of Austria (1480–1530) in Mechelen, see Finot, *Inventaire* 429. 'Dyane et Actheon', coming from the entrance to the warm room, was with the painter in Bruges ['des mains du peintre (Gossart?) a Bruges'], see Denhaene G., "Les collections de Philippe de Clèves", *Bulletin de L'Institut Historique Belge de Rome* 45 (Turnhout: 1975) 340.

45 See Babelon J.-P. (ed.), *Le château en France*, Centre national des Lettres, Caisse nationale des Monuments historiques (Paris: 1986) 252; Eschenfelder, *Bäder* 71–72.



FIGURE 2.11 *Jan Gossart (ca. 1478–1532), Venus of Rovigo. Pinacoteca dell'Accademia dei Concordi, Rovigo, Italy Scala / Art Resource, NY, ART95869.*

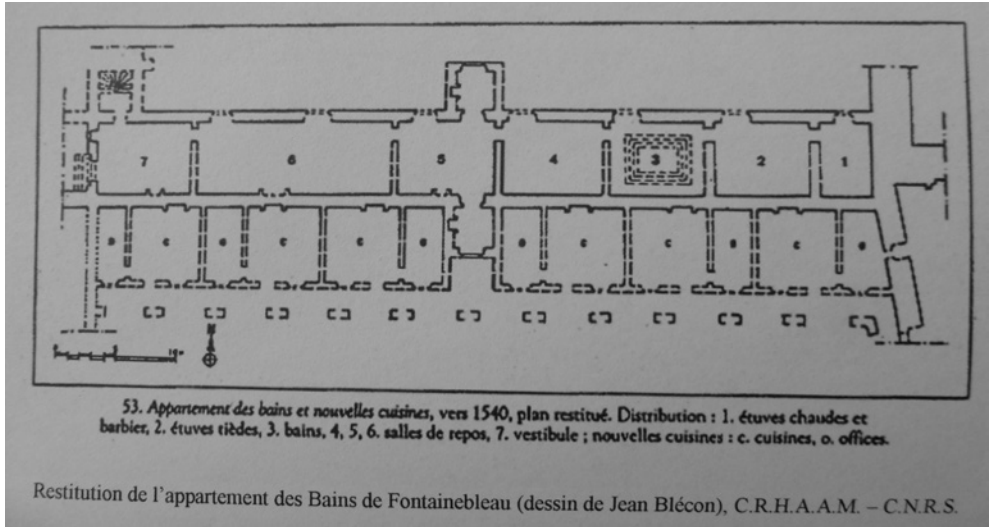


FIGURE 2.12 *Floorplan, Fontainebleau, reconstruction. Appartement des Bains (ca. 1540). Baths (northward), Kitchen (southward); 3. sunken pool (bassin). From Jean-Rymond Fanlo (ed.), Actes du colloque Le Mythe de Diane en France au VI^e Siècle, (Paris: 2001) p. 429, Fig. 3.*

Unfortunately, François I's magnificent complex in Fontainebleau has not survived. A reconstruction of the floor plan is informative, as it indicates a sunken pool like that shown by Vredeman de Vries [Fig. 2.10]. All rooms had views of the courtyard with fountains and the distant garden [Fig. 2.12].⁴⁶ Modelled after Roman *thermae*, the baths were described in 1586 as containing 'baths with hot and cold water, many rooms, sudatorium, frigidarium, spoliarium', each room decorated with remarkable paintings.⁴⁷ The decoration of this

46 Preliminary drawings and reproductive prints convey an idea of the palace, which got its name from the stream of pure water (*fontaine belle eau*), which also fed the baths. Instead of The Twelve Labours of Hercules, François I chose to decorate a gallery with the heroic deeds of Ulysses. See Cordelier D., "L'Appartement sous la Galerie François I^{er} et les Bains, Avant 1540 (?)–1543", in Grandazzi J. (ed.), *Primatice, Maître de Fontainebleau, 1504–1570* [exh. cat., Musée du Louvre, Paris] (Paris: 2004) 186–192. On the antique model for the gallery, the library and the *thermae*, see Tauber C., *Manierismus und Herrschaftspraxis: die Kunst der Politik und die Kunstpolitik am Hof von François Ier* (Berlin: 2009) 268.

47 Guillaume Du Choul 1537 (first published 1556) was the first to praise the enfilade of the baths, which, he argued, were as impressive as the ancient baths of Agrippa in Rome (built ca. 25–19 BC). Fontainebleau had three rooms for bathing and four for resting; the bath

enfilade coincided with the presence in Fontainebleau of a host of Italian artists: Sebastiano Serlio, Cellini, Leonardo, Primaticcio, Rosso Fiorentino, Michelangelo and Giulio Romano, all masters well acquainted with the demands, design and erotic decoration of such baths.

The themes of water and lovers dominated the decoration of Fontainebleau's baths. One room portrayed Neptune, Triton, and their entourages,⁴⁸ and a description of 1642 specifically noted that these paintings were in accordance with the function of the room.⁴⁹ On the walls of the room with the sunken pool Primaticcio illustrated the story of *Diana's discovery of Callisto's pregnancy* [Fig. 2.13]. Bas-reliefs, frescoes and easel painting of lovers—*Venus and Adonis*, *Cephalus and Aurora*, *Neptune and Amphitrite*⁵⁰—decorated the spacious relaxing area. The extent to which the baths dissolved the conventional boundaries of social hierarchy, gender and propriety is demonstrated by the account of a tour given by François I in 1540 for Anne de Montmorency, Connétable de France, Cardinal de Lorraine and Cardinal Ippolito d'Este: neither they nor the ladies of the court, who apparently were all naked, appear to have found the encounter in any way surprising or embarrassing, since, as we are told, they enjoyed an exchange of jokes.⁵¹

on the third floor was 4.75 m long, 3.26 wide and 1.14 deep; rooms with dry air followed the steam baths, see Eschenfelder, *Bäder* 13–19, n. 40; Cordelier, "L'Appartement" 187.

48 'les Dieux des eaux', den Göttern des Wassers, gewidmet: 'Neptune, Triton, & plusieurs Nymphes & Divinitez...., que les Poetes feignent presider sur cet Element' (Gods ... which the poets wrote were suitable to preside over this element).

49 '... divers fictions des Anciens. Autour de cette salle sont cinq grands tableaux dont les sujets conviennent au Lieu; car au premier sont representez les Dieux des eaux, Neptune, Triton, & plusieurs Nymphes & Divinitez, que les Poetes feignent presider sur cet Element. Aux autres se voyent les amours de Iupier & Callisto', in Dan Père Pierre, *Le Trésor des Merveilles de la Maison Royale de Fontainebleau* (Paris, Sebastien Cramoisy: 1642) 47, citation from Eschenfelder, *Bäder* 21.

50 Dan, *Le Trésor* 47: '... divers fictions des Anciens. Autour de cette salle sont cinq grands tableaux dont les sujets conviennent au Lieu; car au premier sont representez les Dieux des eaux, Neptune, Triton, & plusieurs Nymphes & Divinitez, que les Poetes feignent presider sur cet Element. Aux autres se voyent les amours de Iupier & Callisto', cited in Eschenfelder, *Bäder* 21. Even the painting of Rebecca and Eliezer at the Well (Genesis, 24) seems appropriate and may have hung in the vicinity of the sauna. See Jenkins C. in Grandazzi J. (ed.), *Primaticcio, Maître de Fontainebleau, 1504–1570* [exh. cat., Musée du Louvre] (Paris: 2004) 205.

51 Cordelier, "L'Appartement" 186.



FIGURE 2.13 *Francesco Primaticcio (1504–1570), Diana at the Bath with her Nymphs (for Fontainebleau). Pen, brown wash, white heightening, 21.4 × 34.6 cm. Louvre, (Museum), Paris, France.*

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Erotic and Lascivious Images

In addition to wall paintings, the rooms designated for relaxing were hung with easel paintings by the great masters. A suitably sensual work was Michelangelo's *Leda and the Swan*, known only through copies, most notably by Rubens, since its lascivious nature is believed to have led to its destruction.⁵² Lascivious images could be dangerous, especially, as Aristotle noted, for the sensitive souls of young people. Indeed, centuries later, Francesco Colonna wrote in his

52 The painting was destroyed, probably between 1638 and 1643, because of its lascivious representation but is recorded in copies, including two by Rubens. See Wood J., *Rubens: Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists: Italian Artists. Artists Working in Central Italy and France*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard, 27 vols (London: 2011), I, 221, cat. 199. Around 1626 in a room in the summer retreat of Philip IV, all paintings of nudes were covered with curtains when Philip's consort Isabel de Bourbon stepped in. See Porús J., *The Sala Reservada and the Nude in the Prado Museum* (Madrid: 2002) 39.

Hypneromacchia Poliphili of 1499 that men were encouraged to masturbate before a statue of a beautiful nude Venus.⁵³ Titian's *Mary Magdalen*, said by Giorgio Vasari to awaken desire in the viewer, hung close by Michelangelo's *Leda and the Swan*,⁵⁴ while immediately adjacent was another 'bella donna'—none other than the *Mona Lisa*. One wonders whether she too was accorded the same sensual powers. Whatever the case, not for nothing is it said that the Louvre museum was born in François I's bathroom!

Vasari provided yet another reason to admire the *Mona Lisa* when in 1556 he wrote that 'the beauty of women pleases the eye and boosts health'.⁵⁵ The benefits of beauty on health are explained by Alberti, who noted that women's apartments should only contain paintings showing the most perfect human beings, as this influenced female fertility and had an effect on the appearance of their offspring—obviously a factor to be taken into consideration when decorating those areas of the baths and adjacent rooms for recreation where amorous encounters were likely to take place.⁵⁶

Evidence for an awareness of the gender specific effect of paintings and sculptures⁵⁷ is found in the erection of a gilded statue of Hercules in an elevated position in the centre of Lucrezia Borgia's bathing pavilion in Ferrara. We can imagine Lucrezia and her ladies splashing in the water and enjoying

53 Franke, "Jungbrunnen" 205–208; Schrader, S., "Gossart's Mythological Nudes and the Shaping of Philip of Burgundy's Erotic Identity", in Ainsworth, *Man, Myth* 57–67; and Härting, "Mehr Sex" 127–128.

54 On Vasari (1568) see Schlink, *Tizian* 103. On the six easel paintings in the resting area—Rosso's *Judith*, Titian's *Magdalena*, Michelangelo's *Leda and the Swan* and Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, see Eschenfelder, *Bäder* 52. In 1556 Guillaume Du Chouls wrote to Henri I: 'quand ie suis venu à considérer combien de beauté pour le contentement de l'oeil et d'utilité et proffit ils apportoyent aux anciens pour la santé du corps', cited in Eschenfelder, *Bäder* 21.

55 See Coffin D.R., *Gardens and Gardening in Papal Rome* (Princeton: 1991) 89–90, on the Grotto of Voluptuous Pleasure in the Villa d'Este in Tivoli.

56 See Alberti, *Baukunst* 486. Borggreffe interpreted this complex passage on the beauty of Venus as a reference to erotic works in bedrooms. See Borggreffe H., "Tizians sogen. Himmlische und irdische Liebe", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 64 (2001) 331–363, 349, n. 60. Poeschel, *Starke Männer* 56. On Titian's *Venus of Urbino* as an earthly beauty rather than a deity, see Hope C., *Tiziano e Venezia* (Vicenza: 1980) 119–120, and Muller J., "Review: *Rubens and his Circle, Studies by Julius S. Held*", *Simiolus* 14 (1984) 229, n. 2.

57 Poeschel, *Starke Männer*. Under these conditions, paintings of beautiful women—as seen by men—and handsome men—as seen by women—were not just erotic but were also advantageous when it came to family planning.

this spectacle of male virility,⁵⁸ from a vantage point perhaps similar to that shown in Jan Gossart's drawing of *Hercules Boarium*, the ancient sculpture he saw in Rome when he accompanied Philip of Burgundy to Italy in 1508.⁵⁹ Gossart executed in 1516 his impressive *Neptune and Amphitrite* probably for Philip's castle at Souburg near Middelburg [Fig. 2.14].⁶⁰ As Admiral of the Sea,⁶¹ Philip certainly identified with Neptune, and like the god was a notorious womaniser.⁶² Neptune and his wife Amphitrite, a nereid, are shown as colossal figures surrounded by majestic architecture and standing, appropriately, on a plinth submerged in water. It is said that this painting represents the first ever painted depiction of a mythological couple in the Netherlands.⁶³ Given

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- 58 Waarts, *Badkamers* 125. On 'bagni' and Lucrezia's bath as well as the culture of bathing in Italian courtly life, see Burgess W.A., "Silk-Clad Walls and Sleeping Cupids: A Documentary Reconstruction of the Living Quarters of Lucrezia Borgia, Duchess of Ferrara", in Campbell E.J. – Consavari E.C. – Miller S.R. (eds.), *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior, 1400–1700* (Ashgate: 2013) 175–119.
- 59 The group's route was via the Brenner Pass to Trent; Gossart also visited Verona, Mantua, Florence as well as Rome, where he drew the so-called *Hercules Boarium* in the Palazzo dei Conservatori (1509 dated, private collection). See Schrader S., "Drawing for Diplomacy: Gossart's Sojourn in Rome", in Ainsworth M.W. (ed.), *Man, Myth, and Sensual Pleasures: Jan Gossart's Renaissance, the complete works* [exh. cat., The Metropolitan Museum, New York] (New Haven – London: 2010) 52, and cat.100. The British Museum's squared drawing of women bathing may have been a design for a fresco in a bath by or after Gossart. See Stijn Alsteens in Ainsworth, *Man, Myth* 77, cat. 98, ca. 1520.
- 60 Gossart lived from 1509 near to Souburg in Middelburg. Schrader, "Gossart's Mythological Nudes" 57–67.
- 61 On its contemporary title: 'oceani praefectus', see Schrader S., "Gossart's *Neptune and Amphitrite* and the Body of the Patron" in Lehmann A.-S. – Roodenburg H. (eds.), *Body and Embodiment in Netherlandish Art/ Lichaam en Lichaemlijkheid in de Nederlandse Kunst, Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 58 (Zwolle: 2007) 40–57, here 46.
- 62 On Philip as a womaniser, see Ainsworth, *Man, Myth* 65. The function and location of the painting within a bathing context does not hinder its iconographic association with Land/Zeelandia/Amphitrite and Sea/Neptune. See Bass M., *Jan Gossart and the Invention of Netherlandish Antiquity* (Princeton: 2016).
- 63 The question remains regarding the authorship of the many mythological depictions and paintings of nudes owned in 1528 by Philip of Cleve. The artists are not named in the inventory of his estate, nor are the mythological couples identified. Unsuspecting visitors may have been shocked by both the size and nudity of the figures in Gossart's *Neptune and Amphitrite*. The first life-size depiction of Venus was Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* of 1483 (172 × 278cm, Tempera on canvas, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi)—the connection with water is obvious but nothing is known of its original location. According to Poeschel, *Starke Männer* 55, canvas was characteristic for paintings hung in villas. For the influence of Dürer's life-size *Adam and Eve* and Barbari's *Mars and Venus* on Gossart's *Neptune and Amphitrite*, see Mensger, *Jan Gossaert* 73–84.



FIGURE 2.14 *Jan Gossart (ca. 1478–1532), Neptune and Amphitrite (1516). Oak, 188 × 124 cm. Gemäldegalerie Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Germany), Inv. 648.*

PHOTO: JÖRG P. ANDERS.

that both Philip and Gossart may well have seen comparable amorous couples in baths during their time in Italy, it is indeed possible that Gossart's *Neptune and Amphitrite* was painted to fulfil the same function in Philip's own bathing quarters in Souburg. Unfortunately, neither an inventory nor a ground plan of the castle has survived, though we know baths existed in Wijk near Duurstede, where Philip resided from 1517.⁶⁴ One can assume that a bathroom, or even a series of bathing and resting rooms, would have been provided with the degree of comfort considered essential, not only for an admiral or a bishop, but for the courtly and aristocratic elite in general.⁶⁵

In the light of the above, Gossart's *Hercules and Deianira* of 1617 poses an interesting question [Fig. 2.15].⁶⁶ It has been suggested that this small panel, of unknown early provenance, might be a *recordo* of a much larger composition. Given its associations with water and love, the large prototype would, I believe, have been well suited for display in a bathing context, and what more appropriate place than the baths of Philip of Burgundy in Souburg or Wijk. Gossart shows Hercules and his wife, a fountain nymph, embracing in the now familiar niche of a bath. The meaning is unmistakable, for their intertwined legs was a common visual metaphor for sexual intercourse, a message underlined by the phallic nature of Hercules's club. Its erotic and eroticizing themes would have been eminently suitable for the bathing or sleeping area.

I return briefly to Leon Battista Alberti and his guidelines on bathing and relaxing in a villa suburbana, which included the recommendation to rest after bathing, either in bed or in the garden. According to texts by Pliny the Elder and Plautus, the garden lies under 'the protection of Venus',⁶⁷ and Margaret of Austria (1480–1530) may well have followed this idea as she kept Gossart's *Hermaphroditus and Salmacis*,⁶⁸ a beautiful painting ('beau tableau') given

64 Weidema S. – Koopstra A. (eds.), *Jan Gossart, the Documentary Evidence* (London: 2012), 44, 1529, February-March: in the dressing room: two large depictions of naked men; a long picture of three naked people//the remainder from the room above the bath oven.

65 See above, n. 58.

66 1517, Oil on oak panel, 37 × 27 cm, Birmingham, Barber Institute of Fine Arts. Deianeira was Hercules's wife, won in a fight with the river-god Achelous. Ovid, *Metamorphosen*, 9, 98–272.

67 Heinen U., "Rubens Garten und die Gesundheit des Künstlers", *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 65 (2004) 129.

68 *Hermaphroditus and Salmacis* (Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 4.274–388), ca. 1517, panel, 32.8 × 21.5cm, Museum Boymans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. 245. Eichberger D., "Hoofse hobby's over humanisme en mecenaat in de vroege 16de eeuw", *Kunstschrift* 1 (2002), <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/870/>, 32–37, here 35–36. The inventory of Margaret's garden cabinet from 1523/24 also lists an impressive collection of naturalia, including shells and coral.



FIGURE 2.15 Jan Gossart (ca. 1478–1532), *Hercules and Deianeira* (1517). Panel, 37 × 27 cm. The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham (UK), Inv. 46.10.

to her by Philip of Burgundy, in her ‘Cabinet emprès le Jardin’, a cabinet by the garden in the private quarters of her residence in Mechelen. Though there is no documentary evidence of Margaret having a bathing room, it is quite likely she did.⁶⁹ Gossart’s painting has a visual and contextual connection with water since both Hermaphroditus and the water nymph Salmacis stand in a pool. ‘Everything that could be too erotic’—even Conrad Meit’s sculpture of Adam and Eve—was kept in her garden cabinet, where, as Dagmar Eichberger suggested to me, physical passion reigned. The painting is similar in size to Gossart’s *Hercules and Deianeira*, in which the figures sit in niches reminiscent of the architectural niches found in bathing rooms (Fig. 2.15; Fig. 2.8).

Conclusion

Naturally all of these images of amorous couples were open to other interpretations, including Christian ones, as well as provoking Neo-platonic discussions on beauty.⁷⁰ The ability of erotic images to arouse the passions should not be underestimated—true to the motto of this conference: *Ut pictura amor*. Many a painting with a water theme could have been used to decorate rooms designed for bathrooms or for relaxing after bathing, and as such formed a hitherto unrecognized part of European bathing culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Finally, a wide and diverse spectrum of images—from beautiful women like Leonardo’s *Mona Lisa*, Michelangelo’s *Leda with the Swan*, the voyeuristic thrill implicit in *Actaeon observing Diana and her bathing nymphs*, to the portrayal of Herculean virility and nude female beauty as in Gossart’s *Hercules and Deianeira*—also served to encourage bathers to explore the relaxing and enticing pleasures of amorous engagement.

69 At least Margaret knew of Philip’s private bathroom with paintings of nudes from the copy of the inventory of Wynendale (1528) sent to her, see Denhaene, *Collections de Philippe de Cleves* 327.

70 See Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), *Commentarium in convivium Platonis de amore* (first edition, 1484) II, 2: “Divina vero hec speties in omnibus amorem, hoc est, sui desiderium procreavit.” See ww2.bibliotecaitaliana.it (© Biblioteca Italiana 2004).

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Hishikawa Moronobu and the Imprinting of ‘Love’ in Early Modern Japan

Joshua S. Mostow

Considering *ut pictura amor* in the context of early modern Japan presents a number of challenges. Not least is the concept of ‘amor’. There is no such thing in early modern East Asia. The word used in modern Japanese, *ren'ai*, is a nineteenth-century neologism, designed precisely to translate the European concept.¹ What there *is* is passion and longing, called *iro* (literally, “colour”) and *koi* or *omoi*. This is because the *epistémé* of early modern Japan, to restrict myself to it for the moment, was not Christian or Neo-Platonic, but Buddhist, where desire and attachment are believed to lead to pain. The eschatological goal is not mutual love in and of God, but a renunciation of all attachment and a realization of the Void.²

Next, *ut pictura amor* naturally presupposes a theory of *ut pictura poesis*, and this in turn assumes some kind of theory of painting, such as Alberti’s. Despite the fact that pronouncements on painting and its purposes appear as early as the third century BCE in China in the *Han Feizi*,³ and Gu Kaizhi’s *Essay on Painting* (*Hua-lun*) dates to the late fourth century CE,⁴ this lead was not followed by the Japanese. Although a section of the famous *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*, ca. 1008) is now referred to by art historians as the ‘kaiga-ron’ or ‘discourse on painting’,⁵ and the compendium of anecdotes, *Kokon chomonjū* (*Collection of Notable Tales Old and New*, 1254) by Tachibana no Narisue (dates uncertain), contains a whole section related to visual

1 Saeki J., *Ren'ai no kigen: Meiji no ai o yomitoku* (Tokyo: 2000).

2 See LaFleur W.R., *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan* (Berkeley: 1983). Despite the absence of a concept of ‘love’ in pre-modern Japan, scholars still use the word to translate any number of terms from the Japanese; thus a major work by Ihara Saikaku (1642–1693), *Kōshoku gonin onna* (1686), where *kōshoku* means literally ‘to like colour (that is, passion)’ and *gonin onna* ‘five women’ has been translated as *Five Women Who Loved Love*, trans. Barry W.T. de (Rutland, VT: 1956). I shall follow the same convention below.

3 Bush S. – Shih H.-Y., *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge, MA: 1985) 18.

4 Ibid., 20.

5 Akiyama T., ‘Kaiga-ron’, in *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kanshō* 26.12 (Tokyo: 1961) 1–15.

art,⁶ a proper art history and theory do not start until the late seventeenth century with Kano Einō's 1691 *Honchō gaden*, or *Lives of Painters of the Realm*, also known as the *Honchō gashi* or *History of Painting of the Realm*.⁷ Here, at least, we have some general historical and generic coincidence with Vasari and his 1550 *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*.

To be sure, China developed an explicit theory of the equivalence of painting and poetry—'Tu Fu's writings are pictures without forms, Han Kan's paintings, unspoken poems'⁸—especially in the development of literati painting in the Song-dynasty circle of Su Shih (1037–1101). But again this is not imported into Japan until the eighteenth century. Finally, as for any association between portrayals of beautiful women and *eros* and painting, orthodox Chinese painting theory generally denigrated the mimetic and discredited its baser emotional effects, looking to figure painting simply to reveal the righteous and the wicked, a function that was also applied in Japan in the representation of the sage-kings in the imperial palace. While pictures of beautiful women from the Tang dynasty are extant and also appear at the same time in Japan, and while *bijin-ga* was a dominant genre in Japanese early modern woodblock prints and painting, the genre of 'pictures of beautiful women' (*meiren-hua* in Chinese pronunciation) does not really establish itself until the seventeenth century and seems to have generated no philosophical discourse [Fig. 3.1].⁹ Japan, however, had no ideological objections to mimesis, and erotic visual images, both of Chinese and domestic creation, circulated at court and in aristocratic circles as early as the Heian period (794–1185).¹⁰

6 Tachibana N. – Nishio K. – Kobayashi Y. (eds.), *Kokon chomonjū* (Tokyo: 1983). For a partial translation, see Linhartová V., *Sur un fond blanc: Écrits japonais sur la peinture du IX^e au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: 1996) 73–128.

7 Lippit Y., *Painting of the Realm: The Kano House of Painters in 17th-Century Japan* (Seattle: 2012) 157.

8 Bush – Shih, *Early Chinese Texts* 203.

9 Except of ethical and religious condemnation. Su Shih rejected 'likeness in form' as a basis for judging a painting, Bush – Shih, *Early Chinese Texts* 224. But Craig Clunas discusses the existence of erotically explicit imagery from as early as the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) and the apparent explosion in printed erotica in the early 1600s; Clunas C., *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (London: 1997) 149–171. See also Cahill J., *Beauty Revealed: Images of Women in Qing Dynasty Chinese Painting* (Berkeley: 2013); and by the same author, "Beautiful Women and the Courtesan Culture", in his *Pictures for Use and Pleasure: Vernacular Painting in High Qing China* (Berkeley: 2010) 149–197.

10 Mostow J., "National Erotics, Gender, and the Representation of Sexuality in Heian Japan", in Kaminski J.D. (ed.) *Erotic Literature in Translation and Adaptation* (London: forthcoming).



FIGURE 3.1 *Anonymous, Folding Screen Panel with Bird-Feather Decoration and a Painting of a Lady under a Tree (eighth century). Colours and bird-feather on silk, 1360 × 560 mm. Detail, north section. Shōsōin Treasure, Courtesy of the Shōsōin Treasure House, Nara, Japan.*

Where, then, to turn? What possible conceptual or historical similarity could be used to bring together in dialogue European and Japanese ‘discourses’—or at least practices—of the visual arts and ‘love’? The answer, quite simply, is pornography. Here I would like to focus particularly on *I modi* (ca. 1527) of Giulio Romano, Marcantonio Raimondi, and Pietro Aretino and the erotic picture-books of Hishikawa Moronobu (d. 1694) and his predecessors.

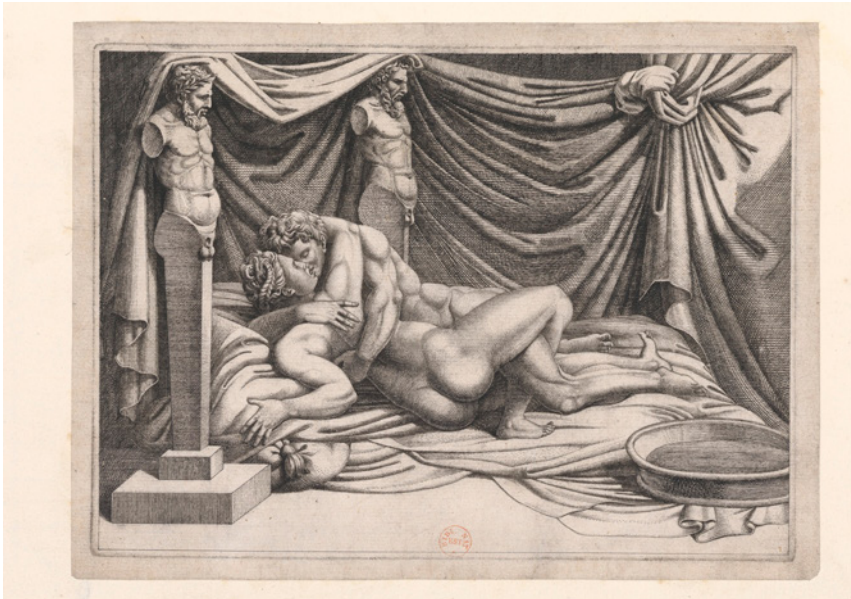
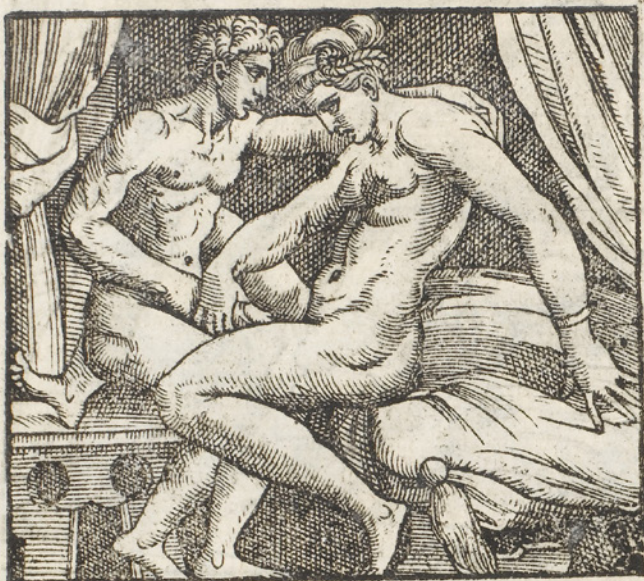


FIGURE 3.2 *Attributed to Jean Frédéric Maximilien Waldeck, pen and ink drawing after an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi after Giulio Romano, I modi, Position 1 (1850s). Ink on paper, 134 × 187 mm. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.*

Let us first review *I modi* in light of the theme of *ut pictura amor*. In 1524 Giulio Romano drew a set of sixteen images depicting heterosexual couples in various positions of sexual intercourse, which were then engraved by Marcantonio Raimondi and circulated. None of these first impressions appears to be extant in its entirety, although there are several copies of the first sheet [Fig. 3.2].¹¹ Shortly thereafter, responding to these images, Pietro Aretino composed one sonnet for each engraving for a new publication.¹² Of this edition there appears to be no trace and what remains is a later pirated woodblock edition [Fig. 3.3]. Aretino's sonnet for this image reads:

11 Turner J.G., "Marcantonio's Lost *Modi* and their Copies", *Print Quarterly* 21.4 (London: 2004) 363–384.

12 James G. Turner suggests instead that Aretino's sonnets may have originally circulated in manuscript, Turner J.G., "*I Modi* and Aretino: I, The 'Toscanini Volume' in Context", *The Book Collector* LX (2011) 559–70; idem, "*I Modi* and Aretino: II, The 'Toscanini Volume' Re-examined" LXI (2012) 38–54; and idem, "Woodcut Copies of the *Modi*," *Print Quarterly*, 26.2 (2009) 115–123.



Quest'è pur un bel cazzo, e lungho e grosso
 Deb (se m'hai cara lasciamel'uedere
 Vogliam prouar se potete tenere
 Questo cazzo in la potta, e me adosso,
 Come s'io vo prouar? come s'io posso?
 Piu tòsio questo, che mangiar ò bere
 Ma s'io ui frango poi stando a giacere
 Farou mal? tu hai'l pensier del Rosso
 Gettati pur nel letto, ó ne lo spazzo
 Sopra di me, che se marphorio fosse
 O un gigante n'haurò maggior solizzo
 Pur che mi tocchi le midolle, e l'osse
 Con questo tuo sì uenerabil cazzo
 Che guarisce le potte da la tosse
 Aprite ben le co'se
 Che potran de le donne esfer uedute
 Vestite meglio sì, ma non fottute

FIGURE 3.3 Anonymous, Pietro Aretino's *I sonetti lussuriosi*, Sonetto 4, illustrated with woodcuts after Marcantonio Raimondi after Giulio Romano (ca. 1555?). Woodblock-printed book, ca. 98 × 132 mm. Former Toscanini volume. Private collection, Milan. PHOTO © CHRISTIE'S IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES.

*Quest'è pur un bel cazzo, e lungo e grosso
Deh se m'hai cara lasciamme 'l vedere
Vogliam provar se potete tenere,
Questo cazzo in la potta, e me adosso,*

*Come s'io vo provar? Come s'io posso?
Piu tosto questo, che mangiar ò bere
Ma s'io vi frango poi stando a giacere
Farovi mal? Tu hai 'l pensier del Rosso*

*Gettati pur nel letto o ne lo spazzo
Sopra di me, che se Marphorio fosse
O un gigante n'havrò maggior solazzo*

*Pur che mi tocchi le midolle, e l'osse
Con questo tuo sì venerabil cazzo
Che guarisce le potte da la tosse
Aprite ben le cosce
Che potran de le donne esser vedute
Vestite meglio sì, ma non fottute.*

This is certainly a beautiful cock, long and thick. If you really care about me let me see it.

Shall we see if you can keep this cock in your pussy with me upon you?

What do you mean, if I want to try; what do you mean, if I can? I'd rather do this than eat or drink.

But if I crush you then, lying down, I will hurt you.

You are thinking Rosso's thoughts.¹³ Go ahead and throw yourself on top on me, in bed or on the floor, since if you were Marforio¹⁴ or a giant I'd be even more entertained by it; just so long as you touch me to the

13 Lynne Lawner writes: 'When the courtesan in sonnet 4 says to her lover, "You're reasoning like Rosso", the reference may be to a specific passage in *La cortigiana* (version 1, II.viii) where Il Rosso brags that he intends to become a greater personage than Marforio [see next note]. Hence the woman is saying, "You're boasting of your prowess in the same way that Il Rosso does. But even if you were Marforio himself, I could handle you"'. Lawner L., *I modi: The Sixteen Pleasures, An Erotic Album of the Italian Renaissance* (Evanston, IL: 1988) 94, n. 3.

14 'The colossal Marforio was once located in front of San Pietro in Carcere behind Campidoglio. Today it is in the courtyard of the Palazzo Nuovo', Lawner L., *I modi* 95, no. 5.

marrow of my bones with your oh-so-venerable cock, which cures a pussy of its jitters.

Open wide your thighs, which can indeed be better seen when dressed, but not fucked.¹⁵

Lynne Lawner sees *I modi*'s antecedents in a) brothel guide-books and 'catalogues' such as *La tariffa delle puttante di Vinegia* (*Price-List of the Whores of Venice*, ca. 1575?); b) 'lists of positions of lovemaking', supposedly based on those of the classical world; and c) 'portraits of courtesans displayed in serial form'.¹⁶ All these genres came into existence in seventeenth-century Japan as well.

Starting in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, *saiken*, that is, directories of courtesans of the licensed quarter were 'customarily published twice a year, in spring (first [lunar] month) and fall (seventh [lunar] month)'.¹⁷ There were also *yūjo hyōbanki*, or 'courtesan critiques'—which also correspond to Lawner's third category of putative courtesan-portraits. The second-oldest-extant example is *Yoshiwara kagami* (*Mirror of Yoshiwara*, 1660) [Fig. 3.4]:

Sanya of the Saburōemon brothel, Kyōmachi

A certain gentleman inquires, 'I have heard that among the countless men with whom a courtesan is wont to share her pillow, she is willing to sexually entertain each and every man without exception. Are such acts always genuine, or do you fake it sometimes?'

Sanya responds: 'It is true that a courtesan is willing to sexually entertain any man with whom she shares her pillow. However, these acts of entertainment necessarily require a little faking. You see, even when a courtesan spends the night with her fondest, most adored client, regardless of how much she may rejoice in chatting and flirting with the man, she may find that her jade gate exudes no moisture whatsoever. On the other hand, it is also possible to become moist when entertaining a man by whom you were previously repulsed. It is difficult to know just how things will turn out; the body seems to act independently from the will. Faking, then, is a necessary part of sexually entertaining a client. You can fight and fuss all you like, but there is no such thing as wholly genuine

15 Talvacchia B., *Taking Positions: On the Erotic in Renaissance Culture* (Princeton: 1999) 205.

16 Lawner L., *I modi* 26–30.

17 Segawa Seigle C., *Yoshiwara: The Glittering World of the Japanese Courtesan* (Honolulu: 1993) 240, n. 6.



FIGURE 3.4 Anonymous, "Sanya of the Saburōemon brothel, Kyōmachi", from Yoshiwara kagami (Mirror of Yoshiwara) (Edo: Urokogataya, 1660). Woodblock-printed book, 191 × 140 mm. Marquand Library of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University.

sexual entertainment. You as the client should be able, first and foremost, to understand the reality of these things'.

The poem around her figure reads:

Sharing a Pillow (*Moro-makura*)
kaku to dani
omofu kokoro wo
shirasan ya
shika fusu nobe ni
moro-makura kamo

Sanya
 It seems that the deer
 lying in the field
 sharing their pillows
 are telling us just what love
 ought to be like [among humans].¹⁸

18 Translated by Kristopher Reeves, with some changes, in Allen L.W. (ed.), *Seduction: Japan's Floating World. The John C. Weber Collection* (San Francisco: 2015) 198.

(Note that the courtesan's name is hidden in the poem: *shirasan ya*). We shall return to Sanya below.

Lists of love-making postures have a very ancient tradition in East Asia. This was because of the early development of Taoist 'internal alchemy' (*neitan*), a kind of sexual yoga whose earliest texts date to the second century BCE.¹⁹ These texts were transmitted to Japan in the tenth century, where they were extracted to create a medical text called the *Ishinpō* (*Method of Essential Medicine*, 982–984).²⁰ Early modern copies of the erotic scroll *Koshibagaki-zōshi* (*Tale of the Brushwood Fence*) suggest an aristocratic tradition of such imagery (the earliest extant example dates from the Kamakura period [1188–1333] but has not been made available to researchers for some decades).²¹ Sets of twelve such images can be traced back to the early seventeenth century.²² Printed books from China were also imported, adapted and reprinted in Japan, such as a 1606 Ming work, *Fengliu juechang tu* (*Pictures of the Height of Sophistication*) [Fig. 3.5]. The poem reads:

Awakening from a spring slumber [or Coming-to after sex]

The clouds have dispersed from the Wu gorge;
The rain has passed through the fragrant bedchamber.
Her boundless, youthful infatuation is clear.
Confused, [naked] like one about to bathe in a warm spring [?],
Slowly tying the cord of her embroidered shirt,
She appears annoyed that someone has roused her from her reverie.
Frivolous one, her tired limbs cannot bear the burden of her garments,
She is too indolent to take up the thin, apricot[-coloured] robe herself.
From under her curved eyebrows she gazes silently at her darling,
Dazed, her thoughts still dwell on that exquisite moment.²³

As can be seen, the accompanying verse is a far cry from Aretino's earthy rhymes.

19 See Harper D., "The Sexual Arts of Ancient China as Described in a Manuscript of The Second Century B.C.," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47. 2 (1987) 539–593.

20 Tamba Y., *The Essentials of Medicine in Ancient China and Japan: Yasuyori Tamba's Ishinpō*, trans. with introduction and annotations by Hsia E.C.H. et al. (Leiden: 1986).

21 Hayashi Y. – Lane R. (eds.), (*Higa emaki*) *Koshibagaku-zōshi* (Tokyo: 1997); and Fukuda K. *Enshoku setsuwa emaki* (Tokyo: 1992).

22 Clark T. et al. (eds.), *Shunga: Sex and Pleasure in Japanese Art* (London: 2013), cat. 16.

23 Ibid., 104. Bracketed text in the original translation.



FIGURE 3.5 *Anonymous, page from Fengliu juechang tu (Pictures of the Height of Sophistication) (China: 1606). Multi-colour woodblock-printed folding album, 220 × 220 cm (picture). Muban Foundation, London.*

Moronobu reprinted and adapted this work in the early 1680s [Fig. 3.6], under the same title. Using the two-band, double-page format typical of *ehon* ('picture books') of the time, he adds a Japanese text on the left-hand page:

During a spring night, he awoke from his sleep and exchanged his love vows with the empress. After their intimacy, they purified their bodies

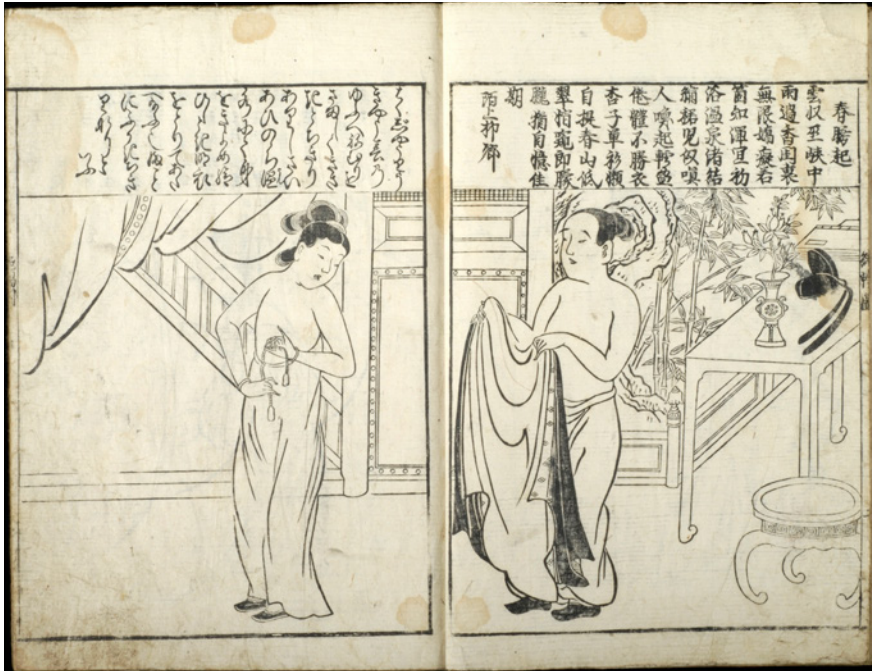


FIGURE 3.6 Attributed to Hishikawa Moronobu, double-page spread from *Fūryū zetchō zu* (*Pictures of the Height of Sophistication*) (Edo: early 1680s). Woodblock-printed book, 22.5 × 17 cm (covers). Muban Foundation, London.

with warm water. Then he took an immaculate robe and handed it to her. Their love vows were deep indeed.²⁴

While the author of the British Museum catalogue entry claims that this 'précis has nothing to do with the Chinese poem', in fact it provides a perfectly reasonable reading of both the original poem and the image from a common East Asian cultural perspective. Granted there are some elements, visual and probably textual as well, that Moronobu seems to misconstrue: the bed behind the female figure of the original is turned into a veranda in the Japanese reproduction, and the woman's small, bound feet are made close to regular size by the Japanese artist. But he has understood the significance of the woman retying her trouser-cord, which he emphasizes visually, for it was an erotic image shared by both cultures, as seen in the ninth-century Japanese court romance *Ise monogatari* (*The Ise Stories*):

24 Ibid., 105.

<i>futari shite</i>	Together we two
<i>musubishi himo wo</i>	reknotted my trouser cord,
<i>hitori shite</i>	and I promise you
<i>ahi-miru made ha</i>	till I am with you again
<i>tokaji to zo omofu</i>	not to loose it on my own. ²⁵

Textually, he has recognized that the reference to the 'Wu gorge' is actually to the story of the Goddess of Mt. Wu, as described in the "Rhapsody of Gaotang" (*Gaotang fu*), attributed to the poet Song Yu (3rd century BCE), which describes a tryst between the Goddess of Witch's Mountain (Wushan) and a king: when the goddess came to the king for their tryst she arrived and departed amidst clouds and rain, and this became in the later literary tradition a euphemism for sex. Moreover, the description of the bath and the woman's indolence is highly reminiscent of the description of Yang Guefei and her relationship with emperor Tang Xuanzong in the *Chang hen ge* (J. *Chōgonka*, A Song of Unending Sorrow) by Bo Juyi in 806 and extremely well-known in Japan.²⁶ Visually, Moronobu has made the image even more 'Chinese', with the addition of the man's court cap and an exotic Chinese garden-style rock behind him of obviously phallic shape.

A collection of works from the 1660s gives us a situation somewhat similar to the group project represented by *I modi*. We have already met the courtesan Sanya from the *Mirror of Yoshiwara*, dated 1660 [Fig. 3.4]. The same artist or atelier appears to be responsible for *Yoshiwara makura-e*, or *Yoshiwara Pillow Pictures*, of the same year [Fig. 3.7]. Here we have a series of forty-six pictures of Yoshiwara prostitutes with clients, demonstrating a variety of sexual encounters. Each courtesan is identified by her crest in the upper right-hand corner—the one illustrated here is Sanya's—but the 'portraits' obviously lack individuality.

Some time after the publication of this work, a necessarily wealthy patron commissioned a scroll painting based on fifteen of the *Yoshiwara makura-e* designs—Figure 3.8 is obviously based on the previous print of Sanya. He then asked the same number of individuals to provide poems to accompany the images. Someone with the pseudonym Sazare-ishi no Iwamaro, for example, inscribed a poem about the famous courtesan Yachiyo—whose name means "ten thousand years":

25 Mostow J.S. – Tyler R. (trans.), *The Ise Stories: Ise monogatari* (Honolulu: 2010) 91.

26 Translation by Witter Bynner, in Birch C. (ed.), *Anthology of Chinese Literature, from Early Times to the Fourteenth Century* (New York: 1965) 266–269.



FIGURE 3.7 Anonymous, "Sanya", from Yoshiwara makura-e (*Yoshiwara Pillow Pictures*) (Edo, 1660). Woodblock-printed book, 137 × 203 mm. Marquand Library of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University.

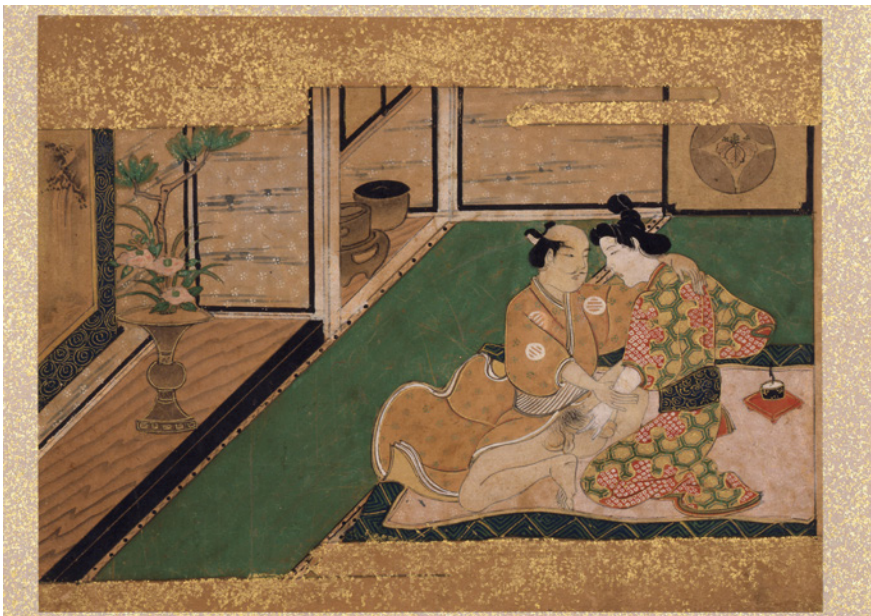


FIGURE 3.8 Anonymous, "Sanya", from a folding album of fifteen paintings and fifteen calligraphies (Edo, 1660s). Ink, colour, and gold on paper, each ca. 168 × 221 mm. Michael Fornitz Collection, Copenhagen.

<i>kimi ga yo ya</i>	My dearest divine
<i>aa sore iku yo</i>	ah, I'm coming
<i>chiyo yachiyo</i>	forever and ever, Yachiyo,
<i>iwao no koke no</i>	your grassy mound
<i>mushi-kaeshitsutsu</i>	I'll dampen again. ²⁷

The difference with *I modi*, of course, is that, on one hand, these poems were not used in a subsequent printed edition and, second, that the images did not go from private, hand-made objects to printed reproductions, but the other way around, from printed text to a deluxe, private manuscript. This difference speaks volumes about their respective ethical and religious contexts: Giulio Romano's images only caused an uproar when they were mass-produced, while there was no state or ecclesiastical reaction to either versions of *Yoshiwara makura-e*. One should also mention that, again unlike *I modi*, there is no evidence in the Japanese context that the seemingly sexually active role of the women depicted caused any condemnation or anxiety.

The textualization (*con*-textualization?) of courtesans should also be noted. The genre of *mono no na no uta* (literally, 'poems of the names of things'), or poems that contained the concealed name of their (usually non-human) subject, such as a flower's name, have a long history in Japanese poetry. Nevertheless, in the two examples given here, we are presented not only with an image of the courtesan, but her embodiment in a classical-style poem, both embedding her textually, but also allowing the reader to invoke her vocally.

Which brings us to Hishikawa Moronobu, considered the 'father' of the genre of *ukiyo-e*, or 'pictures of the floating world'; that is, the demi-monde, chiefly the licensed quarter and the theatres. His prodigious output is responsible for consolidating the visual vocabulary of 'love' in early modern Japan.

'Love' was defined in Japan by the canon of court poetry, starting with the *Kokin waka shū*, or *Collection of Japanese Poems from the Past and Present*, of 905,²⁸ and literary court romances, chiefly the tenth-century *Ise monogatari* and eleventh-century *Genji monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*, ca. 1008). Both include poems and were typically illustrated, with the twelfth-century *Tale of Genji Illustrated Scrolls* fragments being the earliest extant example.²⁹ These

27 Clark, *Shunga* 421.

28 Rodd L.R. (trans.), *Kokinshū: A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern*, trans. L.R. Rodd (Tokyo: 1984).

29 For the *Genji* scrolls, see Watanabe M., *Narrative Framing in Handscrolls and the 'Tale of Genji' Scrolls* (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1995).

For a discussion of early *Ise* and *Genji* illustrations, see Mostow J.S., "Female Readers and Early Heian Romances: The *Hakubyō Ise Stories Illustrated Scroll Fragments*", in idem,

texts established the conventions of aristocratic love, with its polygamous male and a narrative arc that started with him first hearing of the woman and peeping in on her in Spring, through the laments over the short summer nights they could spend together, to the cooling of the man's interest in autumn and the woman's abandonment in winter.³⁰ A printed, illustrated edition of *The Ise Stories* appears in 1608—the first example of an illustrated printed work of Japanese belles-lettres.³¹ *The Illustrated Tale of Genji* (*Ehon Genji monogatari*) appears in 1650 with pictures very much in the classical style.³² Yet almost 650 years separated the *Genji* from its early modern readers, and even an annotated text was readable only by a very small elite.³³ It was Moronobu who appropriated these texts and images for popular culture and made them part of a relatively seamless continuum that went from illustrated classical romances to sex manuals and courtesan critiques. In fact, one of the earliest illustrated books attributed to Moronobu is an erotic work entitled *Ise Genji Shikishi*, or *Ise Genji Decorative Poetry Papers*, published around 1674.³⁴

One of the earliest discourses to emerge on topics erotic in the early modern period was that concerned with *wakashudō*, or 'the way of youths', that is, the pederastic relations that traced their origins back to samurai education. Moronobu's *Aloeswood Perfume Pillow of Youngman's Play* (*Wakashu kyara-makura no asobi*) of 1675 is the oldest extant illustrated text devoted to this subject.³⁵ In Japan, unlike Pietro Aretino's Rome, sodomy—homosexual or heterosexual—was not seen as an offence against nature or God. *Aloeswood Perfume Pillow* was followed the next year by *Genji kyasha makura*, or *The Genji Elegant Pillow*, where thirty scenes from the novel's fifty-four chapters are represented, often including poems from the original.³⁶ *Ko-murasaki* (1677),

Courtly Visions: The Ise Stories and the Politics of Cultural Appropriation (Leiden: 2014) 39–75.

- 30 See Walker J.A., "Conventions of Love Poetry in Japan and the West", *The Journal of the Association of the Teachers of Japanese* 14. 1 (1979) 31–65.
- 31 All illustrations from the Saga edition are included in Mostow – Tyler, *The Ise Stories*.
- 32 Reproduced in Seidensticker E. (trans.), *The Tale of Genji* (New York: 1982).
- 33 Emmerich M., *The Tale of Genji: Translation, Canonization, and World Literature* (New York: 2013) 54.
- 34 Shirakura Y., *Eiri shunga ehon mokuroku* (Tokyo: 2007) 80.
- 35 Mostow, J.S., "The Gender of *Wakashu* and the Grammar of Desire in Late 17th Century Edo", in Mostow J.S. – Bryson N. – Graybill M. (eds.), *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field* (Honolulu: 2003) 49–70.
- 36 Izzard S., *Early Images from the Floating World: Japanese Paintings, Prints, and Illustrated Books, 1660–1720*, Catalogue 12 (New York: 2008) 34–35. The volume is now owned by the Marquand Library of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University.

named after the main female character of the novel, does not have anything to do with it directly, but does speak in places about 'kono michi', that is, 'this way or path'—*michi* or *dō*, as in judo ('the way of suppleness'). In fact, in 1678 Fujimoto Kizan coined the term *shikidō*, or 'the way of eros' and published the *Shikidō ōkagami*, or *Great Mirror of the Way of Eros*, conveying all he had learned during a laborious study of the principal brothels of the land.³⁷ In the discourse of the time, it was understood that there were two 'paths', *wakashudō* or 'the way of youths' for pederastic relations, and *nyodō*, or 'the way of women' for heterosexual ones. It was assumed that an adult male would 'practice' both.

In 1678 Moronobu illustrated a translation of *The Ise Stories* into contemporary Japanese.³⁸ In other words, the commoner population was now gaining access to the ideals of Japanese courtly love. In one year, 1679, he produced illustrations for an edition of the original, classical Japanese of the *Ise*—the first new illustrations to this text since those of 1608; non-pornographic picture-books such as the *Yamato-e-zukushi*, which included yet more episodes of the *Ise*; and the manual of sexual positions *Koi no mutsugoto shijū hatte* (*Pillow Talk of Love: Forty-Eight Throws*), where forty-eight sexual techniques are demonstrated, parodying the forty-eight recognized throws of sumo wrestling.

We can exemplify Mononobu's approach to 'love' with a page from his 1682 *Ehon Makura-e daizen* (*Picture-Book: Great Compendium of Pillow-Pictures*) [Fig. 3.9]. On the right, drawn in a cartouche in the shape of a folding fan, we see an early-modern samurai in an apparently unhappy meeting with a courtesan, sake cups piled up untouched between her and her child attendant (*kamuro*). On the left, in a cartouche of the shape usually used for the inscribing of classical poetry, we see Heian-period aristocrats *en flagrante*. Yet it is the poem inscribed below the contemporary samurai that is in fact a well-known classical verse, by Fujiwara no Atsutada (906–946):

<i>ahi-mite no</i>	When compared to
<i>nochi no kokoro ni</i>	the feelings in my heart
<i>kurabureba</i>	after we'd met and loved,
<i>mukashi ha mono wo</i>	I realize that in the past
<i>omohazarikeri</i>	I had no cares at all. ³⁹

37 Fujimoto K., (*Shinpan*) *Shikidō ōkagami* (Tokyo: 2006). In English, see Rogers L., "She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not: *Shinju* and *Shikidō Ōkagami*", *Monumenta Nipponica* 49.1 (Spring 1994) 31–60.

38 Imanishi Yūichiro (ed.), *Tsūzoku Ise monogatari* (Tokyo: 1991).

39 Mostow J., *Pictures of the Heart: The Hyakunin issu in Word and Image* (Honolulu: 1996) 269.



FIGURE 3.9 *Hishikawa Moronobu, double-page spread from Ehon Makura-e daizen (Picture-Book: Great Collection of Pillow-Pictures) (Edo, 1682). Woodblock-printed book, 260 × 180 mm. International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto.*

The samurai, in other words, is what is known as a *mitate*, or humorous updating of something classical.⁴⁰ This technique allowed Moronobu, and many artists after him, to appropriate the classical canon for non-elite use. Pornographic genres were very much a part of this.

In fact, the entire two-page spread is structured through contrasts and the humorous juxtaposition of classical *ga* ('elegance') and contemporary *zoku* (the quotidian or base). The images would be read starting from the right. The first couple are drawn on a folding-fan-shaped cartouche, echoing the fan in the man's hand. We are in the room of a high ranking courtesan, as evidenced by her luxurious bedding in the upper right corner, her child attendant, the expensive lacquer-ware cups, and the folding screens on which classical poems, perhaps even the one translated above, have been pasted, testament to the courtesan's education. These screens extend into the Heian-period setting, where they would be equally appropriate. Here again we have bedding, and then the vigorously engaged couple, the lady's enthusiasm (indicated by her raised legs) contrasting with the coolness of the Edo-period professional. The right's patterned clouds have been replaced by classical 'spear-mist'

40 Haft A., *Aesthetic Strategies of the Floating World: Mitate, Yatsushi, and Fūryū in Early Modern Japanese Culture* (Leiden: 2012).

(*suyari-gasumi*), though the inclusion of plovers (*chidori*) is an early-modern touch. Finally, the canonical poem on the right is paired with an early modern verse on the left. By this criss-crossing of classical and modern, Moronobu appropriates the aristocracy's cultural capital and asserts the equivalence of early modern capitalism.

Bette Talvacchia's words about Aretino could be applied equally to Moronobu:

The importance of Aretino's contribution to the history of *I modi* and to the creation of an enduring genre of erotica cannot be emphasized strongly enough. Aretino devised a new product by combining printed images and words, visually giving more or less comparable space to their impagination and conceiving the poems as a kind of commentary or extended gloss on the visual episode. By combining the two on the same sheet and enclosing them within the same covers, Aretino incorporated as a physical entity the reading of prints and the perusal of printed texts, giving them a portable form that could be widely marketed and which invited the complicity of the individual consumer.⁴¹

Moronobu's *ehon*, or 'picture-books' too were a similar innovation.⁴² He established the basic unified visual vocabulary to represent the classics of courtly love, the courtesans of the licensed quarter, the actors of the stage, and the positions of love-making. Like *I modi* this was a particularly early modern phenomenon, dependent on the rise of print capitalism and a growing literacy. But the comparison can only take us so far. Moronobu's discourse is normative, not libertine, and it is part of no critique of either the church or the state. In fact, the classics were being taught to women to imbue them with 'gentility' (*yasashisa*) and to teach them to write poetry, an essential art for social mobility.⁴³ On the other hand, erotic picture-books were often designed to teach conjugal harmony, and a healthy sex life was understood as the foundation of a successful household.⁴⁴ The postures revealed were not considered

41 Talvacchia B., *Taking Positions* 80–81.

42 Suzuki J., "Moronobu e-zukushi kō", *Kokubungaku Kenkyū Shiryōkan kiyō* 41 (March 2015) 1–30.

43 Nakano S., *Kangaeru onnatachi: kana-zōshi kara 'Onna daigaku'* (Tokyo: 1997); Tocco M., "Norms and Texts for Women's Education in Tokugawa Japan", in Ko D. – Kim Haboush J.H. – Piggott J.R. (eds.), *Women and Confucian Cultures in China, Korea, and Japan* (Berkeley: 2003) 193–218; and Mostow J., "Illustrated Classical Texts for Women in the Edo Period", in Kornicki P. – Patessio M. – Rowley G.G. (eds.), *The Female as Subject: Reading and Writing in Early Modern Japan* (Ann Arbor: 2010) 59–85.

44 Gerstle C.A., *Edo onna no shungabon: en to shō no fūfu shinan* (Tokyo: 2011).

‘unnatural’ nor was the inclusion of male sodomy. Consequently, Moronobu’s works were not proscribed or censored—until Japan’s return to the ‘family of nations’ in the late nineteenth century.

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Chinese ‘Paintings of Beautiful Women’ and Images of Asia in a Jesuit Text

Dawn Odell

The symposium that produced this volume of essays was remarkable not only for its spirit of collaboration amid animated discussion of love, pictorial artifice, and affective imagery, but also for the symposium organizers’ decision to include papers that addressed materials made in regions outside of Europe. This is a welcome step toward what I hope might be a new methodological path within our discipline. For although much of my scholarship has focused on a binary relationship between artistic practices in China and the Netherlands, and particularly on charting Dutch responses to Chinese art in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, I have become increasingly interested in challenging my own, and what I perceive to be the field’s, focus on reception as the most effective vehicle for understanding work produced across geographic divides in the early modern period. In expressing this concern, I do not wish to undermine the important political critique that can be voiced through analyses concentrated solely on Europe’s receipt and re-presentation of imagery appropriated from regions outside of the continent. Works by Benjamin Schmidt and Elizabeth Sutton are two recent examples within the field of Dutch studies that bring to light the coercive mercantile and imperial projects facilitated by the Dutch publication and dissemination of pictorial information about Asia, Africa, and the Americas to European viewers.¹ But equally persuasive critiques of Eurocentrism and of the norms instantiated within the practice of art history may also emerge if we follow Rey Chow’s call ‘to create more supple, rather than mutually exclusive or ignorant networks of thinking and writing’ and expand disciplinary boundaries to allow for a comparative and ‘elliptical’ approach to our materials.² In other words, I suggest that we put European art in conversation with art produced in other regions not only via analyses of

1 Schmidt B., *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe’s Early Modern World* (Philadelphia: 2015); and Sutton E., *Capitalism and Cartography in the Dutch Golden Age* (Chicago – London: 2015).

2 Chow R, “An Interview with Rey Chow”, *Social Semiotics* 20.4 (2010) 466. David Damrosch employs the term ‘elliptical’ in his essay on methodology and world literature; see Damrosch D., *What is World Literature* (Princeton: 2003) 133, 281–284.

images and objects that physically travelled between Europe and other parts of the world, a trajectory which often results in arguments focused on the influence and reframing of 'foreign' works within receiving countries, but also by considering, as occurs within this volume, the possibility of commensurability between visual languages, material cultures, and social and political contexts that do not necessarily 'touch' on the ground.

In this essay, I ask: How do we read an early modern image of a 'Chinese' woman? Specifically, how do we understand a pair of engravings that illustrate Athanasius Kircher's [1602–1680] *China [...] illustrata* within the related contexts of Chinese representations of 'beautiful women' (*meiren hua*), discourses of love (*qing*), poetic painting, and calligraphic arts [Figs. 4.1 & 4.2]?³ In answering this question, I explore examples of European and Chinese visual materials for which art historians have not yet constructed self-conscious histories. Excluded from traditional and often nationalistic art historical narratives, the images discussed in this essay reveal affinities between the visual strategies employed in China and the Dutch Republic to elicit desire within a shared culture of print.

James Cahill's discussion of one of the illustrations in Kircher's text provides an example of the ways that comparison between geographic regions may unintentionally reify cultural difference [Fig. 4.1].⁴ Cahill employs the print as a vehicle to assert the 'awkwardness' that results from a confrontation between European and Chinese representations of women in interiors. Although he acknowledges that there is no evidence the unknown author of the European print and the Chinese artist, Yu Zhiding [1647–1702], to whose painting Cahill compares the engraving, would have seen one another's work. Cahill uses the comparison to judge each image's success in achieving a culturally located standard. As Martin Powers has argued, this kind of cross-cultural comparison runs the risk of essentializing cultural difference because it assumes art provides information about 'fundamental values of different and competing civilizations'.⁵ Rather than approaching Kircher's print and its twin as examples of what European artists, in their ignorance, get wrong when depicting

3 Kircher A., *China monumentis [...] illustrata* (Amsterdam, Joannem Janssonium à Waesberge & Elizeum Weyerstraet: 1667).

4 Cahill J., *Pictures for Use and Pleasure: Vernacular Painting in High Qing China* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: 2010) 184–185.

5 Powers M.J., "The Cultural Politics of the Brushstroke", *The Art Bulletin* 95.2 (2013) 312. For related discussions of cross-cultural comparison and especially its role in the study of Chinese art, see Clunas C., "The Art of Global Comparison", in Berg M. (ed.), *Writing the History of the Global: Challenges for the 21st Century* (Oxford: 2013) 165–176; and Elkins J., *Chinese Landscape Painting as Western Art History* (Hong Kong: 2010).



FIGURE 4.1 *Anonymous, engraved illustration to Athanasius Kircher's China monumentis, qvā sacris quā profanis: nec non variis naturæ & artis spectaculis, aliarumque rerum memorabilium argumentis illustrata, auspiciis Leopoldi Primi roman. imper ... (Amsterdam, Joannem Janssonium à Waesberge & Elizeum Weyerstraet: 1667), 36.7 × 23.5 cm.*

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FIGURE 4.2 *Anonymous, engraved illustration to Athanasius Kircher's China monumentis, qvā sacris quā profanis: nec non variis naturæ & artis spectaculis, aliarumque rerum memorabilium argumentis illustrata, auspiciis Leopoldi Primi roman. imper ... (Amsterdam, Joannem Janssonium à Waesberge & Elizeum Weyerstraet: 1667), 36.7 × 23.5 cm.*

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Chinese subject matter, I discuss the prints as a space for finding commensurability between European and Chinese constructions of pictorial artifice and the use of affective imagery as they negotiate relationships between images and texts in print culture. Similar to contemporary literature that is dispersed globally through translation, I see the works discussed here as moving 'into an elliptical space created between the source and receiving cultures, shaped by both but circumscribed by neither alone'.⁶

Love, the theme that unites our volume, is a rich concept upon which to explore this proposed ellipse. For although in recent periods much Chinese writing about love reflects an accommodation of European conceptions of romance, through what Haiyan Lee has characterized as a 'tortuous process of negotiation and hybridization, which is still very much ongoing', in the seventeenth century Chinese discussions of emotions and passions circled around a term *qing*, whose genealogy is distinct from that formed by European discussions of 'love' in the same period.⁷ The 'cult of *qing*' is an expansive topic with a rich literature among scholars of the late Ming [1368–1644] and early Qing [1644–1911] dynasties. The term refers to increasingly complex and increasingly visualized engagements with different forms of desire, beginning in the sixteenth century and extending into the eighteenth.⁸ Its origin and growth are often linked to economic transformations in late Ming society, including a maturing money economy and a rising merchant middle class.⁹ However, elites whose social status resided in their identity as scholar-officials and who deliberately placed themselves outside of mercantile systems of exchange, also appropriated *qing* and exploited it for their own agendas, in part to reassert their role as caretakers of Chinese, specifically Confucian, cultural heritage.¹⁰ In pre-Han (206 BCE–220 CE) philosophical texts, *qing* had been conceived in relation to *xing*, one's 'inborn nature'. The comparison frequently cast *xing* in a more positive light, as an aspect of the metaphysical realm and representative of a tranquil state of inactivity, whereas *qing* was understood to reside in the realm of experience, indicative of the possibility of action and therefore

6 Darmusch, *What is World Literature* 283.

7 Brown C., "Getting to the Heart of the Matter", *Stanford News Service*, February 13, 2012) <http://shc.stanford.edu/news/research/getting-heart-matter>.

8 For an important work on the subject, see Huang M., "Sentiments of Desire: Thoughts on the Cult of Qing in Ming-Qing Literature", *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 20 (1998) 153–186. The summary of the 'cult of *qing*' I present here is indebted to his analysis.

9 Lee H., *Revolution of the Heart: A Genealogy of Love in China, 1900–1950* (Stanford: 2006) 25.

10 Huang, "Sentiments of Desire" makes this argument.

also prone to excess.¹¹ The terms were, however, often conflated and divisions between the two easily permeated. A third term, *yu*, was both less ambiguous and more threatening than either *xing* or *qing*. It was also more precisely equated with physical desire and turbulent and potentially dangerous states of mind. As Martin Huang argues, Ming dynasty authors intent upon valorizing human emotion and repositioning their status as elites within the context of their own subjectivity made a rhetorically astute choice to focus upon *qing*, a term which, with its earlier ties to *xing* in the context of ancient philosophical discourse, intellectualized and redeemed desire in a way that *yu*, with its negative associations of earthy physicality and turbulent passions, would never have facilitated.¹² *Yu* inhabited the 'cult of *qing*' nevertheless, and the unstable boundaries that remained between emotion, intellect, and desire resulted in representations that sentimentalized physical passion and sensualized romantic sentiments.¹³

The two engravings that are the focus of this essay were created in an environment (Kircher's book was published in seventeenth-century Amsterdam) that resembled China's in its growing mercantile culture, expanding middle class, and attention to negotiating the place of love in a discourse that linked domesticity to national identity. As this essay argues, visual conventions, both Chinese and European, that were at work within these larger social settings, were conflated with Kircher's own individual and wide-ranging intellectual interests to coalesce in the pictorial strategies employed within the Dutch publication of *China [...] illustrata*. In addition to his curiosity about East Asia, Kircher also studied ancient Egypt, biblical history and exegesis, the history of language, fossils, volcanoes, and microorganisms, among other topics.¹⁴ Despite these diverse interests, Kircher never traveled outside of Europe, and *China [...] illustrata* was based upon information gathered from his correspondence with fellow Jesuits who lived in Asia and from material published by other European travelers. Kircher's distance from his source materials is

11 Huang, "Sentiments of Desire" 156.

12 Huang, "Sentiments of Desire" 160.

13 Huang *ibid.* See also Graham A.C., *Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature* (Albany: 1986) 59–66; and Hansen C., "Qing (Emotions) in Pre-Buddhist Chinese Thought", in Marks J. – Ames R.T. (eds.), *Emotions in Asian Thought: A Dialogue in Comparative Philosophy* (Albany: 1995) 181–212.

14 Kircher published over 30 books, and the corpus of scholarship on his work is extensive; among the most important for this essay are: Findlen P. (ed.), *Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man Who Knew Everything* (New York: 2004); McCracken G.E., "Athanasius Kircher's Universal Polygraphy", *Isis* 39 (1948) 215–228; and Szczesniak B., "Athanasius Kircher's *China Illustrata*", *Osiris* 10 (1952) 385–411.

important in understanding not only his analyses of China, but also their representation in printed form and particularly the use of pictorial artifice within his text. Kircher overtly cites his Jesuit colleagues in several places in his book, making his distance from his source material clear, including in his description of the two illustrations of Chinese women:

Caput variis fasciis, praesertim nobiliores [...] precioso gemmarum ornatu implexis involutum, mirum capiti decorem conciliant, vestes floribus, avibus, similibusque ornamentis contextae, ad pedes usque defluunt, ita tamen ut id, in quo maximam pulchritudinem consistere putant, non tegant. Caeterum tempus fallendi gratia nunc catulis, modo avibus, similibusque delectamentis occupantur. Verum ut Lector curiosus verum nobiliorum foeminarum hiatum exactius concipiat, hic earum, quae palatio Regio serviunt, foeminarum vestitum, à P.P.N.N. mihi ex China transportatum, eo quod sequitur schemate exhibendum censui.¹⁵

The women, especially the nobles [...] cover their hair with strands of precious gems, which adds great beauty to their heads. Their clothing is embroidered with flowers, birds, and other ornaments, and flows to their feet. They do not cover the feet, which is a woman's greatest beauty. They pass their time playing with puppies, birds, or other such diversions. If the reader wishes to examine the dress of the palace noblewomen more closely, I have attached a drawing of the clothing sent to me by the fathers from China.¹⁶

Here, Kircher presents the *schemate* as if it were a form of evidence, an object from China reframed for European viewers within the covers of Kircher's book.¹⁷ This pair of images is not the only place in Kircher's text where Chinese women are pictured. Earlier in *China [...] illustrata*, the reader encounters two sections, one titled the 'different habits, manners and customs' of China from Father Dorville's and Gruberus' accounts of the kingdom, and the other 'correcting the Chinese calendar', which describe the differing appearance of Chinese women depending upon their occupation, social status, and province

15 Kircher, *China [...] illustrata* 115.

16 Kircher A., *China Illustrata*/by Athanasius Kircher; translated from the Latin by Charles D. van Tiel (Bloomington: 1987).

17 For an interesting approach to issues of framing and repositing see Grasskamp, A., "EurAsian Layers: Netherlandish Surfaces and Early Modern Chinese Artefacts", *Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 63, 4 (2015) 363–398.

of origin.¹⁸ The illustrations in these earlier sections are a third of a page in size, or smaller, and the female figures are categorized and pictured in a manner similar to that employed in a number of seventeenth-century travel books. The figures are either, as in the first section, grouped with men of a related social and geographic identity and ranged in a line at the foreground against a cityscape 'typical' of their environment or, in the second section, placed individually within twelve boxes spread across two pages. Each box holds a single male or female figure engaged in an activity related to their occupation or social status (sowing rice, for example, or drawing well water) all of which take place outside. The boxes also contain captions explaining the 'type' that is pictured, for instance, 'a woman from Honan'.¹⁹

In contrast, the paired illustrations of Chinese women that are the focus of this essay and which appear later in Kircher's text, are not only full-page depictions of women in interiors, as opposed to the smaller size engravings depicting figures out of doors, but also represent the women surrounded by objects that signal 'China'—a scroll painting, statue of a Buddha, and porcelain vase among these. This crafts a viewing experience different from that prompted by the boxed, categorized, and captioned images placed earlier in the book. It supports Kircher's written text, which presents the paired engravings as if they are the 'drawings' themselves, images that traveled from China and appear now before the viewer as an 'attachement' to the book. This presentation creates a seductive fiction that the reader is not only encountering a Chinese painting (mediated, perhaps, via its imitation in engraved form) but also that the viewer encounters the painting, and the woman pictured within it, as a Chinese viewer might. To a twenty-first century viewer familiar with Chinese art, Kircher's engravings do indeed appear to be in conversation with Chinese imagery, and specifically with Chinese depictions of 'beautiful women'. Visual cues, which will be addressed in more detail below, confirm this, but so too does Kircher's mention of 'puppies', which are not present in the illustrations, and whose absence suggests that the author was aware of visual or textual sources beyond the information contained in the 'drawing'.

The genre of image to which Kircher's text responds and with which Kircher's Dutch engravers appear to have been conversant, is a *meiren hua*, a 'painting of a beautiful woman', a form of representation that became increasingly popular in late Ming China within discourses of the 'cult of qing'. *Lady at Dressing Table* by Wang Qiao (active 1657–1690) is typical of this genre in its presentation of an elegant female in an intimate interior surrounded by

18 Kircher, *China* [...] *illustrata* 66–77 and 108–115.

19 Kircher, *China* [...] *illustrata* image is located before page 13.

opulent and precisely described furnishings [Fig. 4.3]. In the analysis that follows of this and related paintings, I draw attention to the particular ways that this form of representation creates for the beholder a sense of physical presence and emotional attachment through a conjunction of female bodies, inanimate objects, and poetic texts. Wang's painting is over 100 centimeters in height, and its large size encourages the viewer to linger over the many naturalistically rendered details contained within it, including objects such as the discarded garments and disheveled bedclothes that hint at sexual intimacy, as well as materials associated with scholarship and antiquarianism, among these the books and scrolls that are piled on the bed's canopy and an ancient bronze vessel and other artifacts displayed on the dressing table. Gathered within a single domestic space, this combination of objects emphasizes both the allure of the woman's physical beauty, a beauty conveyed in part by the elegance and sensuality of her environment, and the equally compelling attraction of her intellect, suggested by the books and antiques with which she is surrounded. In addition, however, the painting crafts a viewing experience that insists upon a male presence even as, or rather precisely because, it emphasizes male absence. The rumpled bedding and discarded clothing indicate that we are viewing the aftermath of an intimate encounter. The evocation of such moments, as I argue below, builds upon a long tradition of poetic and pictorial imagery in which male viewers observe the emotions of women who suffer from their absence.

It is difficult to know whether the woman in Wang Qiao's painting was meant to be understood as a courtesan or a gentlewoman, whether the books and scrolls are solely for her own or her customer's or husband's pleasure. The image's confusion of intellectual and physical desire not only reflects the complexity of domestic, courtesan, and consumer cultures as they were entwined in seventeenth-century discourses of femininity and *qing*, but also builds upon an earlier visual tradition exemplified by Zhou Fang's (ca. 730–800) iconic *Ladies with Flowers in their Hair* [Fig. 4.4]. Zhou's painting depicts women of the Tang dynasty [618–907] court idling in a garden and entertaining themselves with small dogs and other creatures.²⁰ The work's lack of narrative, coupled with the women's languid poses, emotional isolation from one another, and the contrast between their opaque, mask-like, white faces and the alluring transparency and physical presence of their light-sparkled garments construct a representation as complex as Wang Qiao's in the image's ability to evoke emotion through the representation of beautifully realized inanimate objects. Paintings such as Zhou Fang's provide a pictorial response to a style of poetry,

20 Perhaps a precursor to the 'puppies' Kircher mentions in his text.



FIGURE 4.3 *Wang Qiao, Lady at Dressing Table* (1657). *Ink and color on silk*, 39 1/4 × 22 13/16 in. (99.7 × 57.9 cm) 91 3/4 × 35 in. (233.05 × 88.9 cm) (mount, with roller).

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FIGURE 4.4 Attributed to Zhou Fang (active late 8th–early 9th century), *Ladies Wearing Flowers in Their Hair*. Hand scroll, ink and color on silk, 46 × 180 cm. SHENYANG, LIAONING PROVINCIAL MUSEUM.

‘Palace Style’ poetry (*yutai xinyong*), that was already deeply imbued with the visual.²¹ This poetic form emerged as early as the second century BCE and employs an interplay of lyrical expression and visual metaphor to develop and depict the emotions of love, in particular the pain of a love that is unrequited or unfulfilled. Poems of this type often focus upon women stilled and reflective, yearning for lovers who are absent, their physical immobility a counterpoint to the turbulence of inner states of mind. The poems do not describe sexual intimacy, they are not explicit, but the touch of a physical body could be alluded to through, for example, a reference to the fabric of garments moving across skin. The logic of these poems progresses through ‘an interpenetration of emotional statements and presentations of imagery’, and although the poems contain few elaborate and sustained descriptions of individual scenes or objects, they often string together a series of discrete word pictures.²² As Anne Burrell describes it, ‘at first glance the sequence of imagery in a given poem might seem

21 Laing E.J., “Palace-Style Poetry and the Depiction of a Palace Beauty”, *The Art Bulletin* 72.2 (1990) 284–295. See also Ko D., *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China* (Stanford: 1994); and Widmer, E., *The Beauty and the Book: Women and Fiction in Nineteenth-Century China* (Cambridge: 2006).

22 Birrell A., *New Songs from a Jade Terrace: An Anthology of Early Chinese Love Poetry* (New York: 1996) 16–17.

aimless and baffling but in fact the poem is not a ragbag of word-pictures, but a finely spun thread of connections and suggestions. The relationship of images is associative, not discursive.²³ The following excerpt from a poem "About a Deserted Wife" from a Six Dynasties [220–589] compilation of *New Songs from the Jade Terrace* (*Yutai Xinyong*) provides an example of this poetic form:

White, white those pretty girls,
Bright, bright kissed by springtime splendor.
The west side is skilled at courtly dance,
Concert halls resound with clear strumming.
Tuneful pipes ring out from cinnabar lips.
Scarlet strings vibrate beneath white wrists.
Light skirts quiver like lighting,
Twin sleeves streak like mist.
Flower faces suffuse spangled curtains,
Sad echoes pierce Cloudy Han.²⁴

Here, description of materials, environments, and physical effects of sound and light convey the women's emotional vulnerability. The 'sad echoes' of their hearts are represented through the creation of color-saturated images of bodies, clothing, and objects touched by the women—white, white skin; scarlet strings; cinnabar lips; skirts quivering like lightening; sleeves streaking like mist. The 'jade terrace' for which this group of poems is named may refer to the luxurious palaces of elite women, and it cements the notion that male-female love plays out within a specific environment coded as feminine and domestic, in which materials and settings reveal female states of mind and the male presence is always outside of the image, 'the silent recipient and observer of her anguish'.²⁵

As discourses surrounding the 'cult of *qing*' spread in the Ming dynasty, the image of the 'beautiful woman' moved out of painting and poetry and into works of vernacular fiction and theater, where the contradictory implications between *qing* as lofty romantic sentiment and *qing* as physical desire heightened the dramatic tension of Ming dynasty narratives.²⁶ *The Story of*

23 Ibid.

24 This poem, part of a collection compiled by Xu Ling (507–583) ca. 545 CE, is translated in Wang R., *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture* (Cambridge: 2003) 244.

25 Park J.P., *Art by the Book: Painting Manuals and the Leisure Life in Late Ming China* (Seattle: 2012) 176.

26 Huang, "Sentiments of Desire" 183.

the Western Wing (*Xixiang Ji*), for example, a Yuan dynasty [1271–1368] play by Wang Shifu became increasingly popular in the seventeenth century. It is thought to be the most widely published play in Chinese history. The play tells the story of a star-crossed love affair between a scholar (Zhang Sheng) and a beautiful young woman (Cui Yingying). Upending conventional standards of behavior between elite women and their suitors, the couple in *The Story of the Western Wing* consummate their relationship before they are married, recasting a traditional narrative of tragic romantic love into a occasionally comedic tale of sexual adventure.

In a surprising turn that is especially important for our understanding of the engravings in Kircher's book, seventeenth-century publishers of popular, secular, and sexually explicit novels and plays such as *The Story of the Western Wing* appropriated elite traditions of 'beautiful women' paintings and poetic text-image relationships in order to enhance the affect of their visualizations.²⁷ I believe that the model for Kircher's paired engravings was most likely a Chinese woodblock printed book such as *The Story of the Western Wing* rather than a scroll painting. No matter which medium informed the illustrations in Kircher's book, a discussion of the means by which elite scholar-artist aesthetics were sutured to bawdy and naturalistic narratives, and the role that imitation plays in this conjoining, is essential to understanding not only late Ming dynasty print culture but also the strategies employed in Kircher's text. When Chen Hongshou, for example, a famous painter whose woodcut illustrations to the 1639 edition of the *The Story of the Western Wing* are among some of the most remarkable of the late Ming/early Qing dynasties, depicts the scene in which Yingying sends gifts to student Zhang (who has successfully passed the imperial exam, thus ensuring that he and Yingying will be able to marry at last), Chen Hongshou focuses upon a quiet moment within the action-filled narrative [Fig. 4.5]. Beyond the artist's playfulness in challenging the viewer's ability to know which of the object's contained in the illustration are animate as opposed to human-made—the peacock in the left-hand corner, for example, appears less lifelike than the smiling lion-shaped bronze vessel on the right—he presents Yingying (the figure on the right; her maid stands to the left) not as an excited young woman eager to be reunited with her lover, but as a reflective 'beautiful woman', still, silent, and inwardly focused, as she

27 Ma M.C., "Linking Poetry, Painting, and Prints: The Mode of Poetic Pictures in Late Ming Illustrations to the Story of the Western Wing", *International Journal of Asian Studies* 5.1 (2008) 1–51. Ma Meng-ching argues that rather than emphasizing the story's sexuality, many publishers of the drama modeled the work's illustrations on the mode of poetic pictures.



FIGURE 4.5 Chen Hongshou (1599–1652), carver: Xiang Nanzhou (active mid-17th century), “News of Success (*Bao jie*)”; woodblock printed illustration to Zhang Daojun (d. 1642) (ed.), *Wang Shifu* (ca. 1250–1307), Rare Edition of the Northern Story of the Western Chamber (*Xixiang ji*), Corrected by Zhang Shen zhi (1639), 25.9 × 35.6 cm. each page.

BEIJING, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CHINA.

gazes at the jade hair ornament she prepares to send to her suitor.²⁸ The image emphasizes Zhang’s absence and Yingying’s longing in a manner that reverberates with the ‘sad echoes’ of ‘Palace Style’ poetry.

28 Bentley T.H., *The Figurative Works of Chen Hongshou* (Farnham, Surrey: 2012) 62, believes that Chen further muddles distinctions between the ‘real’ and the supernatural, conflating the peacock with a phoenix.

In addition to quoting subtly from the imagery associated with paintings of 'beautiful women', printers suffused even the most earthy of narratives with sentiment through the incorporation of poetry. Publishers not only framed illustrations with excerpts from the narrative presented as if they were poetic verse, but also emulated in woodblock print the appearance of poems handwritten in a manner resonant with elite calligraphic and brush painting traditions.²⁹ Because printers wished to emulate poetic painting by pairing visual images with fragmented poetic phrases, 'the criterion used for choosing subject matter for illustration was no longer that of representing an episode from the story, but of finding a line appropriate to creating a suitable picture'.³⁰ This argument extends to a pair of pages from one of the most sexually explicit novels of the Ming dynasty, the *Jin Ping Mei* (*The Golden Lotus* or *The Plum in the Golden Vase*) [Fig. 4.6]. In the 1695 edition, the character Li Ping'er is posed opposite a page printed with characters that imitate the spontaneous muscularity of calligraphy written in a swift-flowing cursive script. The flexible line of this calligraphic style allows the beholder to relive the calligrapher's experience of writing the text.³¹ The woodblock print replicates the effect of an ink soaked brush laying down a thick, sooty mark and, as the ink is absorbed, the silver-gray tonality and spare, attenuated residue of an increasingly dry brush. The characters of this text form a couplet in seven syllable lines that reads: 'Within the chamber she spares no effort to make her husband die nine times on her, as for yellow gold, in private she would hand it out as a gift to her lovers'.³² The elegance of the calligraphy and the elite status and ancient history attached to beautiful writing undermines the bawdy nature of the poem's content. The presentation of the figure Li Ping'er is similarly contradictory. She stands isolated against a blank background, leaning on a table and holding a fan, with her eyes averted from the viewer, suggesting perhaps an introspective state of mind, visual cues that are conventional with images of 'beautiful women'. And yet, the exaggerated sway of Li Ping'er's torso is a much more active stance than we find in many images of 'beautiful women' (compare the

29 Ma, "Linking Poetry" 2.

30 Ibid. 6–7.

31 Calligraphy is considered by many to be the most important art form in China in part because it allows for expressive brushwork similar to, or perhaps the origin of, brushwork in painting. See, for example, Wen F., *Art as History: Calligraphy and Painting as One* (Princeton: 2014); and Murck A. – Wen F. (eds.), *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy and Painting* (Princeton: 1991).

32 With thanks to Yugen Wang for help with this translation.



FIGURE 4.6 Anonymous, woodblock printed illustration to volume one, Zhang Zhu Po (1670–1698) (ed.), “*Xiaoxiaosheng*”, *Jin Ping Mei* (1695), 100 juan, bound in four volumes, height: 24 cm.

MANCHESTER, THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER, THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY.

torque of her body with the stasis of Yingying's in the illustration to *The Story of the Western Wing* [Fig. 4.5]), and the wrinkles of her gown draw attention to her groin. Both individually and as a pair, the *Jin Ping Mei* text and image are neither so 'hot' as the content of the book they illustrate, nor so 'cool' as the poetic painting tradition they emulate, but instead inhabit a charged space between the two.

These two pages from the *Jin Ping Mei* evoke a *qing* that is intellectual as well as physical, cultural as well as carnal. In addition, the paired pages are an important example of a new pictorial strategy associated with the representation of 'beautiful women' in the late Ming, that is, the use of illusion, the creation of a simulacrum, to evoke desire. As noted above, a part of what makes the 1695 edition of the *Jin Ping Mei* 'poetic' and invested with elite status is not simply the inclusion of a poetic couplet but the illusion that the couplet was handwritten. Efforts to seduce the viewer with artifice became especially important during the late Ming when both the romantic model and the visual manifestation of 'beautiful women' was transformed and transplanted from

a focus on palace women in secluded retreats to the life of the city and, by extension, to courtesan culture.³³ In painting, this relocation meant not only that *qing* was conceived of as more sexual but also that it was conceived of as more commercial. If the aim of the producers of the 1695 *Jin Ping Mei* was to sell more copies by burnishing the work with the patina of elite calligraphic and poetic traditions, the aim of many of the later representations of 'beautiful women' was to encourage in the viewer a desire to possess not simply the image, but the woman herself. A life-size painting by Hua Xuan [ca. 1736] of *Eight Beauties*, which depicts a row of women viewed at half-length, leaning on a balustrade and gazing intimately at the beholder, is one example of this new form of art.³⁴ Although the women actively communicate with the viewer through their direct glances, the barrier of the balustrade's handrail and the subtle latticework of the cornice above frame the women in such a way that their bodies are protected from physical touch. This construction makes the few places where the women's hands rest on the balustrade's rail and the sleeves of their gowns drape over it all the more alluring. The theatrical nature of the painting together with the work's life-size format suggest that it may have been hung publicly, perhaps even, as James Cahill has suggested, acting as an advertisement for the women's sexual services.³⁵

Even in less overtly commercial imagery, for example a life size painting of a woman in her bedroom by an anonymous early eighteenth-century artist, the figure's confrontational look out at the viewer, which contrasts with the averted glances and inward gazes of earlier 'beautiful women' imagery, makes her presence palpable and, when encountered at eye level, jolts the beholder into the sensation of having confronted a physical body [Fig. 4.7]. In addition, the receding lines of the bed on which the woman sits anchor her in a three dimensional setting, which is extended by the ink landscape painted on the bed's backboard, and promotes the illusion that the viewer's space extends into hers. The eighteenth-century Qing dynasty court achieved new heights of complexity in its use of pictorial artifice to craft the illusion of architectural

33 Cahill makes this argument in "Beautiful Women and Courtesan Culture", in *Pictures for Use and Pleasure* 149–198.

34 This painting is now in a private collection. It was lot 151 sold at Sotheby's in New York on March 17, 2009. Its dimensions are 330.2 by 132.1 cm. <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2009/fine-chinese-ceramics-and-works-of-art-no8524/lot.151.html>.

35 Cahill, *Pictures for Use and Pleasure* 152–153. Kristina Kleughten extends this argument by reminding us that 'enticing from the balustrade' (*guolan*) is a poetic euphemism for prostitution; see Kleughten K., *Imperial Illusions: Crossing Pictorial Boundaries in the Qing Palaces* (Seattle: 2015) 245.



FIGURE 4.7 *Anonymous, perhaps a follower of Leng Mei (1703–1742), Beautiful Woman in Her Boudoir, Traditionally said to be a portrait of Madame Hedong (1618–1664) by Wu Zhuo (active 17th century). Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, with spurious signature reading “Wu Zhuo”, painting proper: H. 119.5 × W. 62.3 cm (47 1/16 × 24 1/2 in.) overall mounting with roller ends and cord: H. 263.5 × W. 89.5 cm (103 3/4 × 35 1/4 in.). CAMBRIDGE, HARVARD ART MUSEUMS/ARTHUR M. SACKLER MUSEUM, ORIENTAL OBJECTS FUND.*



FIGURE 4.8 Visitors to “China: The Three Emperors, 1662–1795” exhibition at the Royal Academy of Art, London’s Piccadilly (November 7, 2005) study a panel from the series *Twelve Beauties at Leisure*, ca. 1709–1723. Screen painting now mounted as hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, each 184 × 98 cm.

BEIJING, PALACE MUSEUM.

space. A photograph of museum visitors confronting two paintings from a group of twelve that would have originally decorated a standing screen in the Yongzheng Emperor’s [1678–1735] private study shows how much the space inhabited by the women is joined with our own [Fig. 4.8].³⁶ The moon doorways frame the beholder’s view into the interiors, the first in a series of frames that encourage the spectator to move more deeply into the increasingly private and nested spaces beyond. These interiors are coded as feminine and sexual through the rooms’ contents, so that ‘visual penetration of the feminized and

36 For more on these images, the Han rather than Manchu dress of the women, and the allure, both erotic and cultural, of women of Han ethnicity within the Manchu court, see Wu H., “Beyond Stereotypes: The Twelve Beauties in Qing Court Art and the ‘Dream of the Red Chamber’”, in Widmer E. – Chang K.S. (eds.), *Writing Women in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: 1997) 306–365.

eroticized space becomes not just a metaphor but an affective analogue for sexual union.³⁷ The strategies employed in pictures such as these may be a visual response to a new textual phenomenon, that is, the increasing prevalence in late Ming/early Qing literature of narratives in which paintings of women come to life, a Pygmalion trope familiar to many readers steeped in European traditions but which in China reveals that a 'painting surface could be a porous border between mortal and supernatural worlds'.³⁸ Feng Menglong's (1574–1646) *A Classified History of Love* (*Qingshi le lüe*), for instance, contains several stories in which paintings of women are brought to life through the love of a male beholder. Although the women always return to the spirit world from which they originate, physical traces of their embodied encounters with male lovers are left behind on the surface of the painting.³⁹

The three paintings described in the sections above are all works of the eighteenth century that reflect and extend pictorial strategies employed in seventeenth-century printed texts such as the *Jin Ping Mei* and *The Story of the Western Wing*. They also owe a debt to visual models presented in works produced by the Jesuit missionaries in China, in some instances the very men with whom Kircher was in conversation. Giulio Aleni's [1582–1649] translation of Jerome Nadal's [1507–1580] *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* is just one oft-cited example of the printed materials produced under Jesuit agency in an effort to translate Christian representation into a Chinese idiom, and which provided Chinese artists with new strategies, among these the use of one-point perspective, for crafting pictorial space [Fig. 4.9].⁴⁰

Aleni's woodblock print returns us to Kircher's engravings, for this essay began by considering James Cahill's discussion of Kircher's illustration as an example of a European artist's ability to depict shadowed, three-dimensional space 'better' than a Chinese contemporary, an approach that emphasizes the

37 Cahill, *Pictures for Use and Pleasure* 187.

38 Kleughten, *Imperial Illusions* 237–238. See also, Zeitlin J., "The Life and Death of the Image: Ghost and Female Portraits in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Literature," in Wu H. – Tsiang K.R., *Body and Face in Chinese Visual Culture* (Cambridge: 2005) 229–256; and Zeitlin, J. "Making the Invisible Visible: Images of Desire and Constructions of the Female Body in Chinese Literature, Medicine and Art", in Donawerth J. – Seef A. (eds.), *Crossing the Boundaries: Attending to Early Modern Women* (Newark: 2002) 48–79.

39 Kleughten, *Imperial Illusions* 237.

40 Nadal J., *Evangelicae historiae imagines: ex ordine Euangeliorum, quae toto anno in Missae sacrificio recitantur, in ordinem temporis vitae Christi digestae* (Antwerp, Martinus Nutius: 1593).



FIGURE 4.9
Anonymous, "The Visitation",
woodblock printed
illustration to Giulio Aleni
(1582–1649), *Life and Passion
of Christ* (China, ca. 1640).
CAMBRIDGE, HARVARD
UNIVERSITY, HOUGHTON
LIBRARY.

incommensurability of artistic practices between Europe and China. I read Kircher's engraving differently, and I find that its most striking aspect is not the 'rightness' of its space or the 'wrongness' of its representation of Chinese art but the legibility of the text that hangs behind the woman [Fig. 4.10 and 4.11]. Paired with the second engraving and read in the context of Kircher's book as a whole, these framed Chinese characters provide access to the ways that Kircher's representation is in conversation with Chinese depictions of 'beautiful women'. Here, I turn my argument toward calligraphic practices in order to understand how imagery of 'beautiful writing' intersects with imagery of 'beautiful women'. By building upon my earlier discussions of the strategies employed by late Ming dynasty publishers to imitate in woodblock the affective qualities of calligraphy, the following pages suggest that Kircher's engravings do more

than merely respond to (or 'receive') Chinese models. They also participate in a language of print that was shared between China and Europe, a language that celebrates imitation as a means to convey beauty and elicit desire.

For many viewers familiar with European painting and especially seventeenth-century Dutch art, the framed Chinese characters, these 'pictures within pictures', are familiar 'keys' that transform a painting into an 'interpretable picture'.⁴¹ The 'pictures within pictures' in the pair of Kircher engravings draw our attention in part because of their formal qualities. The printmaker who produced Kircher's illustrations engraved almost the entire surface of his plate in order to cover the image's floor, wall, table, dress, and porcelain with patterns. In the midst of such decorative commotion, the quiet of the stark white 'canvas' brings the sooty black of the characters forward. But their form also surprises because these images are not the pseudo-Chinese characters



FIGURE 4.10 Detail of Fig. 4.2, Anonymous, engraved illustration to Athanasius Kircher's *China monumentis, qv̄a sacris quā profanis: nec non variis naturæ & artis spectaculis, aliarumque rerum memorabilium argumentis illustrata*, auspiciis Leopoldi Primi roman. imper ... (Amsterdam, Joannem Janssonium à Waesberge & Elizeum Weyerstraet: 1667), 36.7 × 23.5 cm.

PORTLAND, LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE, WATZEK LIBRARY,
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES.

41 Stoichita V., *The Self-Aware Image: An Insight into Early Modern Meta-Painting* (Cambridge: 1997) 181.



FIGURE 4.11 Detail of Fig. 4.1, Anonymous, engraved illustration to Athanasius Kircher's *China monumentis, qv̄a sacris qv̄a profanis: nec non variis naturæ & artis spectaculis, aliarumque rerum memorabilium argumentis illustrata*, auspiciis Leopoldi Primi roman. imper ... (Amsterdam, Joannem Janssonium à Waesberge & Elizeum Weyerstraet: 1667), 36.7 × 23.5 cm. PORTLAND, LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE, WATZEK LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES.

commonly found in Dutch delftware and other European materials arts, but legible writing.⁴² When read together, right to left, as one would read an East Asian text, the characters create the adjective used to describe a woman who is sweet, fair, and graceful. This word, *yao tiao*, is found in one of the oldest collections of poems in Chinese history, the *Shijing* (*The Classic of Poetry* or *Book of Songs*) [11th–7th century BCE], and it continues to appear in literature and discourses of romantic vernacular drama and fiction throughout the Ming dynasty.⁴³

The calligraphic characters in Kircher's illustrations are then a form of poetic 'caption', similar to the poetic fragments paired with illustrations in the

42 For examples of pseudo characters on delftware, see Odell D., "Porcelain, Print Culture, and Mercantile Aesthetics" in Cavanaugh A. – Yonah M. (eds.), *The Cultural Aesthetics of Eighteenth-Century Porcelain* (London: 2010) 141–158.

43 In the first poem of this collection, the term *yao tiao* is used.
關關雎鳩，在河之州。
窈窕淑女，君子好逑。

1695 edition of the *Jin Ping Mei* discussed above. However, these fragments of poems are also paintings, not simply because they are framed as one would a European picture, but because the characters are presented to emphasize qualities of their pictorial, as opposed to textual, status in a manner that would be familiar to viewers of seventeenth-century Chinese art. Following a tradition already established, as I have argued above, by the illustrations within printed editions of seventeenth-century vernacular literature, the Chinese characters framed in Kircher's text aim at a simulacrum of handwritten words. The engraver uses parallel marks, rather than the cross-hatched mesh employed elsewhere in the print, to build up a tone that is at once intensely dark against its white 'canvas' but also allows strips of light to emerge between the horizontal marks, creating the illusion of a character that has been written with a brush and which, as individual hairs separate, reveals the paper beneath. In addition, the way in which each 'stroke' of the character is ended replicates either the instant when the brush is swiftly lifted from the surface to leave jagged points of wet ink behind, or the moment when the writer gently circles back with the tip of the brush before lifting it from the surface in order to end the stroke with a rounded finial.

In a previous essay, I approached Kircher's study of China and *China* [...] *illustrata*'s text-image relationships in terms of Kircher's concern with the origins of Chinese as a written language and the place of China in the development and hierarchy of human civilizations.⁴⁴ Kircher believed that the existence of Chinese characters helped to answer larger questions about how writing signifies, the chronology of language's development throughout human history, and, especially, the possibility of recreating a Universal Language, which had been lost when God punished humanity for its hubris in constructing the Tower of Babel and was replaced with a variety (or babble) of tongues. In concert with other scholars who received information about China from missionaries and merchants, Kircher believed that Chinese could be this lost language because of its great antiquity and its appearance, which to him fit the criteria of Real Characters; that is, words that operate in the manner of unmediated pictures and whose representation was therefore natural rather than conventional.⁴⁵

44 Odell D., "Creaturely Invented Letters and Dead Chinese Idols", in Cole M. – Zorach R. (eds.), *The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World* (Farnham, Surrey: 2009) 267–288. See also, Weststeijn, T., "From Hieroglyphs to Universal Characters: Pictography in the Early Modern Netherlands", *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 61 (2011) 238–281.

45 Kircher, *China* [...] *illustrata* 226. For more on the search for a Universal Language, Mungello D.E., *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origin of Sinology* (Honolulu: 1989).

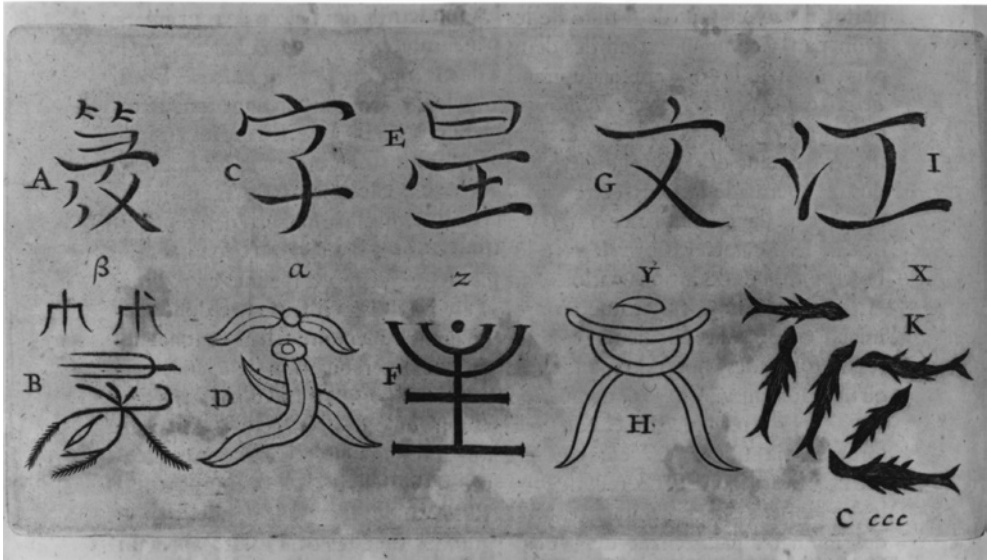


FIGURE 4.12 *Anonymous, engraved illustration to Athanasius Kircher's China monumentis, quâ sacris quâ profanis: nec non variis naturæ & artis spectaculis, aliarumque rerum memorabilium argumentis illustrata, auspiciis Leopoldi Primi roman. imper ... (Amsterdam, Joannem Janssonium à Waesberge & Elizeum Weyerstraet: 1667), 36.7 × 23.5 cm.*

PORTLAND, LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE, WATZEK LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES.

In an illustration from Kircher's text, we see how seemingly haphazard groupings of objects from the natural world cohere into written characters. The Chinese word for river (*jiang*), for example (on the far right at top), is shown to have developed from a pattern of six fish lying together (on the far right at bottom) [Fig. 4.12].⁴⁶ Kircher's analysis emphasizes China's place within biblical history as it also conceives of Chinese characters as transparent reflections of the natural world. By doing so, it ignores the degree to which human agency and human time are captured in and conveyed through Chinese calligraphy, and suppresses the ways that the fluid laying down of ink allows a viewer to follow the rhythm and placement of an artist's hand. This ability to re-experience the original act of creation is one of the most important affective qualities of calligraphy and a reason that the imitation of expressive brushstrokes in

46 This is not the way that the history of Chinese as a written language would be understood by linguists today.

the 'inscription' of the 1695 *Jin Ping Mei* transforms the print from a text into a site of evocation and personal projection.⁴⁷

In contrast, instructions and examples provided by European writing manuals of the seventeenth-century attempt deliberately to conceal the movement of an individual hand so that the ink appears to be an impressed image of the words, a fixed text, rather than the record of the act of writing. Jan van den Velde's *Spiegel der Schrifkonst*, provides just one example of the devaluation of individual style in the formation of letters in favor of standardized 'national hands'.⁴⁸ Books of calligraphy such as Van den Velde's demonstrate that virtuosity in writing is found not in the creation of a personal and idiosyncratic style, but in the suppression of individuality so that the student assumes, through practice and imitation, an impersonal and codified writing technique. This conception of good calligraphy fits well within larger European concerns about the development of language as an evolutionary process, one that bears the impression of historical rather than individual time.

If artistic theory of the Ming dynasty finds calligraphy to be at its most painterly when it is at the furthest remove from legibility, European writing most approaches painting when the pen's line is pushed to its representational limits. The stunning representation of a Dutch East India Company ship from Jan van den Velde's book, for instance, appears to be created from a single unbroken movement of the pen [Fig. 4.13]. In this book, virtuosity is demonstrated not by the calligrapher's willingness to expose individual idiosyncrasies in spontaneous applications of ink, but by the writer's control over the pen's movement, to craft a coherent picture from a single entwined line. The viewer cannot easily find where the line begins or ends, for it resolves itself into an image that must be apprehended in a single moment of viewing.

The binary between European theories that stress the importance of historical time in the formation of language, on the one hand, and a Chinese recognition of personal duration in the creation and appreciation of an individual text, on the other, is frayed in the context of Kircher's calligraphic 'picture within a picture'. As the interpretive windows into his engravings, the framed pieces of calligraphy operate in a manner not unlike the painting of the *Last Judgment* in Johannes Vermeer's [1632–1675] *Woman Holding a Balance*. For just as Vermeer sets up a distinction between the animation of the writhing

47 For more on duration in the appreciation of calligraphy, see Ledderose L., "Chinese Calligraphy: Its Aesthetic Dimension and Social Function", *Orientations* (1986) 35–50.

48 On Van den Velde's imitative paradigm of 'national hands', see Melion W.S., "Memory and the Kinship of Writing and Picturing in the Early Seventeenth-Century Netherlands", *Word & Image* 8 (1992) 48–70.

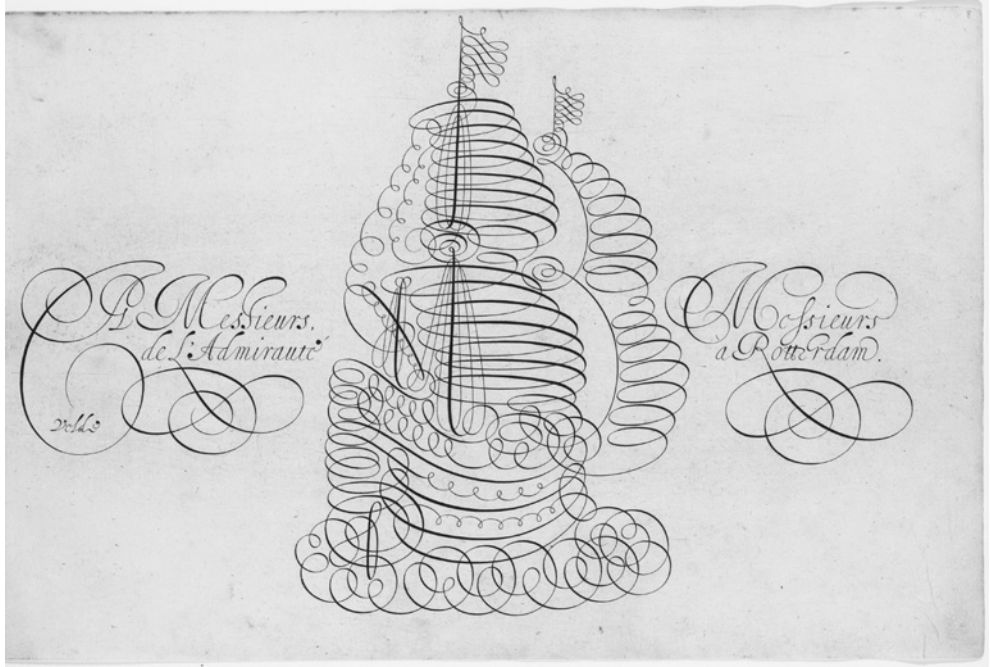


FIGURE 4.13 Jan van de Velde (1568–1623), illustration to *Spiegel der schrijfkonste in den welcken ghesien worden veelderhande Gheschriften met hare fondementen ende onderrichtinghe / utgheheven door Jan vanden Velde ... (Rotterdam, [Jan van Waesberge?]: 1605), 23 × 34 cm.*

NEW YORK, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS.

figures within the *Last Judgment* and the stillness of the woman who stands before it, so too within Kircher's engraving do the animated written images quiet the 'living' women in the foreground. Especially when read in the context of Kircher's larger illustrative program, and with the knowledge that Kircher understood Chinese writing as an ancient, God-granted, and transparent means of picturing spoken language, the juxtaposition between the 'stilled' female figures and the expressive brushwork behind them, creates a surprisingly unique view of Chinese women for Europeans. The unusual nature of these illustrations as compared with Kircher's book as a whole makes rhetorical sense, however, when we consider that Kircher presents these images to the viewer not as European productions (as most of his illustrations are) but rather as Chinese works. By imitating calligraphic brushwork within the frames of his 'pictures within pictures,' Kircher's engravings imitate a woodblock print imitating a

handwritten poem. In this way, Kircher's text not only mirrors the content of Chinese printed books such as the *Jin Ping Mei*, which nest explicitly sexual narratives between 'handwritten' poetic couplets, but also employs the medium of print in a manner commensurate with larger late Ming and early Qing pictorial strategies. That is, his text utilizes print as a vehicle for transplanting imagery from one cultural context to another. Just as the late Ming/early Qing publishing industry transplanted imagery from the viewing circles of elite scholar-artists to the realm of popular culture, similarly, the view of 'beautiful women' presented in Kircher's text imitates a 'Chinese image' in an effort to reposition the original within a European viewing space. The beautiful Chinese women pictured by Kircher become as rare, inanimate, and foreign as the expensive objects that surround them (the form of the female figure in the second image even eerily echoes the tall porcelain vase beside her). Kircher's prints elicit a desire similar to that raised by the tradition of 'beautiful women' paintings and prints that preceded and followed his work, in that the women presented in Kircher's text are not alluring because of an obviously displayed sexuality; they become desirable only when animated by their juxtaposition with poetry and calligraphy.

In the tradition of 'beautiful women' paintings and of the Chinese wood block-printed vernacular texts that allude to this older tradition, Kircher's *schemata* juxtaposes text and image, poem and beauty, and employs pictorial artifice to bring beautiful writing to life and to reveal the ways that print culture mediates visual conventions circulating both in and between China and Europe.

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PART 2

Metamorphic Imagery of Love



Enacting the Erotic Body: Pictorial and Spectatorial Evocations of Corporeality among Jan Gossaert and His Patrons

Haohao Lu

Gossaert's *Venus* and the Animated Body

The Rovigo *Venus*, painted around 1521 and one of the first mythological paintings in the Low Countries to depict the naked female body, endows the sensuous goddess with a commanding presence [Fig. 5.1]. The figure's sweet countenance and luminous skin combine monumental frontality and robust musculature. A polished antique urn holding gillyflowers, a popular love token, stands beside her, while just behind, the helmet, bow, winged quiver, and arrows of Mars and Cupid allude to the presence of Venus's romantic companions. The goddess's gripping female form—taut limbs, undulating contours, and buxom build—solicits passionate, if not prurient, looking. At the same time, the pudica gesture, portrayed here as one of covering as well as touching, teases the beholder, even infatuates him.¹

Venus's gesture and contrapposto pose echo Praxiteles's *Aphrodite of Knidos*, but Gossaert's tribute to the famed statue is more than a matter of iconography; the painter also applied considerable skill to the task of portraying the polished surface of a work of sculpture. The goddess's cool, smooth skin resembles the lustrous finish of white marble, an impression heightened by the decision to pose her on a dais. And yet, the implication is always that this is a living effigy—that stone is also flesh, flesh stone. Indeed, it is worth

1 That Venus holds and looks into a mirror alludes to the theme of Vanitas. On the basis of an entry in a seventeenth-century inventory of the collection of Melchior Wyntgis, resident of Middelburg and, later, of Brussels—'a standing naked female figure, a Vanity, or all is vanity, painted by Mabuse' ('een staend naekte vrouwen figure, een Vanitas vel omnia vanitas, geschildert by Mabeuze')—the painting has been identified as both *Venus* and *Vanitas*. Entry translated by Maryan W. Ainsworth, in eadem (ed.), *Man, Myth, and Sensual Pleasures. Jan Gossart's Renaissance. The Complete Works* [exh. cat., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York] (New Haven – London: 2010) 229, 231 n. 2. For Wyntgis's inventory, see Hymans H., *Œuvres de Henri Hymans. Etudes et notices relatives à l'histoire de l'art dans les Pays-Bas* (Brussels: 1920) 737–749.



FIGURE 5.1 *Jan Gossaert, Venus (ca. 1521). Oil on panel, 59 × 30 cm. Rovigo, Pinacoteca dell'Accademia dei Concordi.*

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noting that the liveliness of Praxiteles's prototype was a quality praised by ancient viewers, who frequently expressed the impulse to touch the sculpture in a way that one would a naked woman. Lucian, enraptured with the bodily softness of the statue, wrote: 'So great was the power of the craftsman's art that the hard unyielding marble did justice to every limb [...]. What a well-proportioned back! What generous flanks she has! How satisfying an armful [sic] to embrace!'² Valerius Maximus, too, remarked on the marble sculpture's appeal to touch: 'Praxiteles set up Vulcan's consort breathing as it were in marble in the temple at Cnidos. The beauty of the work is such that it was hardly safe from a libidinous embrace.'³ Gossaert, in painting his *Venus*, might have had *Aphrodite's* famed tactile appeal in mind. And given that his likely patron, Philip of Burgundy (1464–1524), was an admirer of ancient art and literature, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Gossaert strove to incorporate allusions to Praxiteles into his picture.

Venus is not the only, or perhaps not even the most striking, work by Gossaert to articulate the body's erotic appeal. All of his known mythological paintings and his depictions of Adam and Eve are notably consistent in this respect. Figures in these images are uniformly sensuous and often engage in amorous pursuits. Yet their sensuousness is not just a result of their nakedness, but also of the pictorial enactment of corporeal traits. Gossaert's depictions of the naked body imply that the beholder may enjoy other forms of sensation beyond vision, including touch, hearing, and possibly even taste and smell.⁴ In other words, the act of viewing may activate other sensory faculties that allow the picture to approach the qualities of an actual body asymptotically. To be sure, even the most dazzled viewer cannot actually feel the softness of Venus's skin or smell the sweetness of the gillyflowers. And yet, paintings such as the Rovigo *Venus* flirt with the beholder, encouraging him to construe the depicted goddess as truly alive, even while eliding her erotic appeal into that of the painting.⁵ Drawing on Gossaert's mythological subjects, this essay will

2 Lucian, *Affairs of the Heart (Amores)*, trans. M.D. Macleod, Loeb Classic Library 432 (Cambridge, MA: 1967) 169–171.

3 Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, ed. – trans. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb Classical Library 493, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: 2000) II 257.

4 Gossaert's double-framed *Venus and Cupid* (Brussels, Musée royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique) inscribes Venus's words on the outer frame, and thus utilizes pictorial means to refer to the faculty of hearing. In this essay, I focus exclusively on the evocation of tactile sensation.

5 This argument derives from Caroline van Eck's articulation of the beholder's 'living presence response' to artworks. Drawing on Alfred Gell's anthropological theory of art as agency, Van Eck pinpoints the simultaneity of the beholder's acknowledgment of the object's real-life

examine that effect of virtual animation, treating it as a form of pictorial agency. The objective is to examine the ways that these works appeal to the beholder's tactile sensitivity. Drawing on primary sources including inventories and diaries, I hope to demonstrate that these pictures were often designed to activate the experience of touch and, in this sense, to create reflexive and deeply erotic spectatorial engagements.

The Evocation of Touch

Despite its classical references, Gossaert's *Venus* is not merely a pictorial reiteration of the *Aphrodite of Knidos*. The goddess looks at the reflection of her face in a mirror, acknowledging her feminine beauty rather than masking it, as the pudica gesture had customarily implied. Venus's self-absorption lends particular importance to the sensuous consequences of her amorous gaze. Attending to herself through both sight and touch, she recalls the figure of Narcissus, even as she achieves a fuller sense of herself than did her unfortunate mythological counterpart.⁶ As she stands on the edge of the dais, threatening to step into the space of the viewer, her gaze and touch also lure him to admire her beauty and, perhaps, even imagine the feel of her body. The painting's composition thus prescribes its own type of spectatorship, in which, as the viewer imagines the feel of the body based on his visual engagement with the portrayal of that body, the senses intertwine. Venus reinforces this intertwinement, too, as her gesture interweaves sight and touch, acknowledging and intensifying the viewer's desire to embrace physically the painted body.

One might ask how sixteenth-century viewers were expected to incorporate two modes of perception—sight and touch—within the act of viewing. Put crudely, how might one have seen haptically, or touched visually? One possible answer to this question lies in Aloïs Riegl's characterization of the viewership of Egyptian art. Riegl suggested that in order to look at figures laid evenly across a shallow plane, one needs to assume a type of viewing that can be analogized to the gesture of touch: by gazing, one grazes those figures, as if one's hand were touching them. According to this model, the eyes engaged

effect and his awareness of that object's status as dead matter and, thus, its 'as-if-living' character. Van Eck C.A., *Art, Agency, and Living Presence. From the Animated Image to the Excessive Object* (Leiden: 2015) 19–23.

6 Marisa Anne Bass has suggested that Gossaert's *Venus* evokes two myths recounted in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: Narcissus and Pygmalion; see Bass M.A., *Jan Gossart and the Invention of Netherlandish Antiquity* (Princeton: 2016) 8–10.

in the haptic mode of viewing would tend to move across the picture plane as if palpating it, thus discerning the texture of depicted subject matter, while also navigating the physical surface of the artwork itself.⁷ Though problematic in some respects, Riegl's argument can sharpen our awareness of pictorial qualities that appeal to the eyes as surrogates for touch and, in the process, call renewed attention to the corporeal implications of sight. In the case of Gossaert's *Venus*, for instance, the subtle interplay of light and shadow revealing a soft, feminine physique suggests the potential for tactile viewing, even as we cannot ignore the fact of Gossaert's enchantingly lustrous pictorial surfaces. Encountering the illusory body's intricate topography, not to mention its sensuousness, one may be enticed to see the painting haptically, that is, to touch the surface virtually, as if caressing the goddess's body with one's hand. This mode of intertwined sensation, I suggest, was a governing principle in Gossaert's mythological subjects.

Perhaps more explicit than *Venus* in evoking imaginary touch is Gossaert's *Hercules and Deianira* (Birmingham, Barber Institute of Fine Arts), a small panel that alludes to the feel of skin on skin by showcasing bodily entanglement [Fig. 5.2]. The painting depicts a deceptively happy couple, yet implies the imminent demise of Hercules by placing the seated Deianira upon his tunic. Foreshadowing the application of Nessus's blood in an ill-fated attempt to ensure Hercules's fidelity, Deianira gathers the tunic in hand, as if preparing to throw it over him. Her desire to bind him to her also comes through in the suggestion of physical restraint, which Gossaert conveys by placing her nearly atop Hercules and by interlocking both figures' legs. In fact, tactile engagement is a central feature of this painting. As Hercules and Deianira wrap around one another, each touches, and feels, the touch of the other. Thus, by reaffirming skin as at once the object and the instrument of touch, the entanglement of the two figures does not simply occasion a bodily exchange; it thematizes reciprocal contact between subject and object, self and other. Structuring tactility as a sensation both *of* and *about* the self, the entwined bodies invite the viewer to align the sensory experience of either protagonist with his own, while also linking that experience to the unhappy (and painfully corporeal) outcome this moment forecasts. In this way, the Birmingham painting encourages the viewer to imagine sensory experiences to which sight can only refer indirectly.

Drawing on neuroperceptual and neuroaesthetic research, Ethan Matt Kavalier recently suggested biological bases for such an empathetic experience of Gossaert's work: 'Subjects observing the depiction of actions display neural responses similar to those of the subjects executing these acts [...].

7 Riegl A., *Late Roman Art Industry*, trans. R. Winkes (Rome: 1985) 24–28.



FIGURE 5.2 Jan Gossaert, *Hercules and Deianira* (1517). Oil on panel, 37 × 27 cm. Birmingham, Barber Institute of Fine Arts.

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Neural activity is found in the same area (the secondary somatosensory cortex) whether a participant has been touched directly or has rather observed someone being touched by an object'.⁸ The experiences of touching and being touched, and of seeing touch transpire, are mutually translatable, for the observation of touch triggers the brain to process what is seen almost as a direct bodily encounter. *Hercules and Deianira*, the subject matter of which is entirely articulated through visual means, would have aptly prompted such tactile processing of visual information.⁹ Thus, ensuring its empathetic potency—i.e., the ability of the painting to align the beholder's experience, both perceptually and emotionally, with that of the protagonists—seems to have been a paramount objective.

We lack contemporaneous written accounts of the patronage and reception of this painting, but the 1517 travel diary of Antonio de Beatis, attendant of Cardinal Luigi d'Aragona, mentions that a large *Hercules and Deianira* was on display in a gallery in Henry III of Nassau-Breda's Coudenberg palace in Brussels. Though too small to be the work mentioned by De Beatis, the Birmingham panel gives us an idea of the kind of painting that was hanging in the Coudenberg palace.¹⁰ (It is, after all, one of a very few early modern artworks to represent this subject; plus, Henry was acquainted with Gossaert and his approach to erotic subjects.) According to De Beatis, the panel was placed close to Hieronymus Bosch's majestic triptych, the *Garden of Earthly Delights*. In a nearby room, Henry was said to have hosted his admiring visitors on a bed—one big enough to accommodate fifty people, according to Albrecht Dürer—where they were entertained with drinks, games, and general roughhousing.¹¹ I will turn to Henry's interest in physical engagement, and to that huge bed, shortly. For now, though, it is worth noting that the erotic

8 Kavalier E.M., "Gossaert's Bodies and Empathy", *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 5, 2 (2013) 6.

9 Kavalier, in *ibid.*, suggests that, because of its evocation of the sense of touch, *Hercules and Deianira* seems to obey the brain's perceptual principal of assimilating vision and touch.

10 Bass notes, on the basis of De Beatis's description of the *Hercules and Deianira* ('di bona statura'), that the painting must have been quite large. Gossaert, in her view, executed the Coudenberg painting; see Bass, *Gossart and the Invention of Netherlandish Antiquity* 81. For De Beatis's account of Cardinal d'Aragona's itineraries, see Pastor L. (ed.), *Die Reise des Kardinals Luigi d'Aragona durch Deutschland, die Niederlande, Frankreich und Oberitalien, 1517–1518, Beschrieben von Antonio de Beatis* (Freiburg: 1905) 89–180.

11 My thanks to Dr. Geert Warnar for reminding me of Henry III's gigantesque bed. On Bacchic conduct in the Coudenberg palace, see Rachfahl F., *Wilhelm von Oranien und der Niederländische Aufstand* (Halle: 1906) 108. On Dürer's remark, see Dürer A., *Memoirs of Journeys to Venice and the Low Countries*, trans. R. Tombo (Auckland: 1913) 57; and

entanglement of Hercules and Deianira would have appeared particularly compelling to a merry, besotted crowd. In such a Bacchic setting, the painting's appeal to touch would not only have inspired empathetic viewing, but also lured the viewers to imagine the pleasures of sexual indulgence.

The Birmingham *Hercules and Deianira* demonstrates more than Gossaert's overall interest in capturing sculptural qualities with painterly means; it also accentuates the tonal and textural differences between male and female bodies. Moreover, such differences are corroborated by the performances of the protagonists' hands. Deianira's tender caress complements Hercules's muscular form as well as accentuates her own femininity. At the same time, Hercules's strong grip, which causes his fingers to dimple her flank, evidences the softness of Deianira's body, while attesting to the forcefulness of his masculinity. Gossaert used palpating hands as a means to bolster figures' illusory third dimension in a number of paintings, the *Neptune and Amphitrite* (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) being perhaps the most famous example [Fig. 5.3]. The monumental bodies of the sea god and his companion look as if they are statues enshrined in an ancient Greek temple. And yet, Gossaert's extensive attention to evidencing the softness of the skin and the wispieness of the hair maintains that the bodies of the deities, like those of Hercules and Deianira, are decidedly fleshly despite appearing statuesque.

The touch of hands is not the same as physical contact with other parts of the body. Hands are the primary instruments of tactile investigation, and as a result we anticipate the feel of an object to be touched. (Aristotle, for instance, had compared the touch of hands to the mind's pursuit of knowledge.¹²) We mobilize our hands to investigate the object, and we treat the qualities of its surface as answers to an unspoken question. By contrast, while the hand palpates purposefully, expecting to be informed, the rest of the body tends to receive rather than pursue tactile information—to be touched or be moved to touch, rather than to touch in its own right. Although all physical contact is shared, touching with hands thus differs fundamentally. Knowing that touch is being felt even as it feels, we seem to be able to acquire the senses of both parties in a tactile exchange. That is to say, we feel both the touch of the other

Gombrich E.H., "The Earliest Description of Bosch's Garden of Delight", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 30 (1967) 405 n. 13.

12 In *De Anima* 431 b26, Aristotle compares the way the mind pursues knowledge to the hands' palpation of an object's surface; see Aristotle, *De Anima. Books II and III (with Passages from Book I)*, trans. D.W. Hamlyn (Oxford: 1993) 65. On the analogy between thought and touch, see Rosen S.H., "Thought and Touch: A Note on Aristotle's 'De Anima'", *Phronesis* 6, 2 (1961) 127–137.



FIGURE 5.3 *Jan Gossaert, Neptune and Amphitrite (1516). Oil on panel, 188 × 124 cm. Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.*

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person and, by implication, the touch of our touch, which becomes the token of empathetic attachment.¹³

In this respect, the intertwining of the two deities in Gossaert's *Neptune and Amphitrite* indicates a profound awareness of their physical engagement. The arrangement of the painting's protagonists structures an interaction that is not merely mutual, in fact, but also reciprocal. The trident-bearing Neptune and the scallop shell-crowned Amphitrite stand side by side on a stone dais. He extends his left arm around her and envelops her fingers in his massive hand as she brings her left arm up to welcome this overture. Mirroring his contraposto pose, she leans into his flank and drapes her other arm around his back, perhaps even resting her right hand on his buttocks. Their massive and boldly displayed bodies, one muscular, the other voluptuous, exude sexual attraction. (The pointy conch shell parodic of Neptune's genitalia boasts his virility, even caricatures it.) Their loving touch indicates that such attraction is not simply shared, but in fact mirrored. And yet, Gossaert has directed Neptune's gaze past Amphitrite's face and toward their interlocked hands, as if the god has been momentarily diverted by the power of her delicate gesture. More absorbed by her touch than by her beauty, he seems almost to muse on the physical return of his affection. Secure in her seductive charm, Amphitrite evades eye contact. She appears to look at, if anything at all, Neptune's suggestive trident. Lips slightly parted to reveal her front teeth, she seems almost mesmerized by this rather obvious reference to his potency.

Turning a blind eye, so to speak, to each other, the couple appear as if they are savouring a tacit moment of mutual affection rendered by the sensitivity of touch alone. Gossaert's decision to circumvent an exchange of gazes underlines the potential of touch in creating a profound experience of intimacy. Vision is rendered secondary in this painting, even though it is not inconsequential to the emotional transaction between the figures. Therefore, while sight remains the primary faculty to be deployed by the viewer, its status as seemingly exclusive mode of discernment is eroded. Not only does *Neptune and Amphitrite* remind the viewer of his subordination of sight to touch, it also compels him to translate his own vision into an empathetic imagination of the protagonists' sensations of one another. The painting animates the two deities as a result, making them not figures merely to be beheld, but living bodies to be caressed. Importantly, as we shall see, such near enactment of figural and

13 This argument draws on the thinking of Maurice Merleau-Ponty on the multiplicity of touch; see Merleau-Ponty M., "The Intertwining—The Chiasm", in idem, *The Visible and the Invisible. Followed by Working Notes*, ed. C. Lefort, trans. A. Lingis (Evanston: 1968) 130–155, esp. 133–134.

fleshly contact was at the same time a significant spectatorial interest. Primary sources, including inventories of Philip of Burgundy's estate, show that erotic paintings were carefully manipulated so that their physicality became a topic of special importance. These images were, in fact, treated not simply as visual resources meant to inaugurate discrete erotic events, but also as integral to those events, almost as erotic partners in their own right.

Activated Artworks

The bastard son of Duke Philip the Good, Philip seems to have had decidedly fleshly interests. Although he served as admiral of the Burgundian fleet and as bishop of Utrecht, Philip was almost as well known for his general preoccupation with the erotic (i.e., not just carnal pleasure, but also works of art addressing or trading in that pleasure). His affinity for the corporeal did not abate with his assumption of an ecclesiastic post; in fact, as his chronicler and secretary Gerard Geldenhouwer noted, he was particularly averse to the abstemiousness of the clergy, both sexual and gustatory:

If any nun, monk, priest, or one of those hailed either as our teachers or theologians admonishingly mentions chastity, he used to laugh out loud, saying it was impossible for men of sound body, in the prime of life, with so much leisure, in so great a supply of all things, who either heat with wine or swell with beer, to live chastely. For this reason he took the chastity of these people to be a most impure affront to human nature. He judged the priests who kept mistresses at home to be much more pure than experts in feigned chastity.¹⁴

That impatience with sexual abstinence shows through in, among other things, the erotic artworks at his episcopal residence at Wijk bij Duurstede, near Utrecht. A 1529 inventory of the property lists a good number of naughty objects. In Philip's bedroom hung a tapestry, which the inventory describes euphemistically as depicting 'a man who wants to put his drill into the web of a young woman'.¹⁵ The cloakroom housed two paintings, one depicting 'naked figures of men', and the other 'three naked folks'. The oratorium was adorned

14 Quoted in Schrader S., "Gossart's Mythological Nudes and the Shaping of Philip of Burgundy's Erotic Identity", in Ainsworth (ed.), *Man, Myth, and Sensual Pleasures* 65.

15 'Noch een stuck tapisserie, daerupstaet een man die zijn fret wilt steken in 't gaern van een jonffrou'; translated by Schrader, in *ibid.* 61. For the inventory entry, see also

with 'a little man made of copper in the antique style, completely naked'.¹⁶ And, perhaps most tellingly, Philip kept an ancient statue of Priapus, the pagan god known for his permanently erect penis, in his bathhouse.¹⁷ Philip was not just Gossaert's most important patron; he also seems to have been the saltiest one.

The most striking entry in the Duurstede inventory refers to a 'large painting of a nude woman with an arrow in the hand called *Cupido* covered with a blue and yellow curtain', hung in a room likely used as a study.¹⁸ Not that the entry describes an exceptionally daring image. Others pushed the limits of sexual provocation even further at that time. For instance, the 1528 inventory of Philip of Cleves, Lord of Ravenstein, registers equally risqué works gifted by Philip, *monseigneur d'Utrecht*: 'a big panel with two nude figures of Mars and Venus' and 'another big panel painting of a beautiful girl who undresses herself'.¹⁹ Nonetheless, Philip of Burgundy's case suggests that the painting was conceived almost as if taking part in its owner's sex life. As the inventory shows, in the study there was 'a bed with a mattress, a [set of] bed-sheets, curtains and other things, entirely made of yellow and blue taffeta'.²⁰ Philip dressed his bed in the same way he dressed the painting, covering it with fabric of the same colours and, one suspects, of the same pattern. Combined with the camouflage provided by the drapery, the bed became an extension of the

Sterk J., *Philips van Bourgondië (1465–1524). Bisschop van Utrecht als Protagonist van de Renaissance, zijn Leven en Maecenaat* (Zutphen: 1980) 57, 237, 302.

- 16 Sterk, *ibid.* 55, 248: 'Twee groete taefferen mit naicte figueren van mannen. Noch een lang taeffereel mit drie naicte luyden'. Sterk, *ibid.* 57, 249: 'Een coperen gegoten manneken up zijn antycks al naect'. I thank Dr. Merel Groentjes for helping me translate these passages.
- 17 *Ibid.* 58, 262–263.
- 18 'Een groot taeffereel van een naict vroukten mit een pijl in de hant genoempt Cupido overdect mit een gardijnken blau ende geluwe'; translated by Schrader, in Schrader, "Gossart's Mythological Nudes" 61. See also Sluijter E.J., "Emulating Sensual Beauty: Representations of Danaë from Gossaert to Rembrandt", *Simiolus* 27, 1/2 (1999) 13; and Sterk, *Philips van Bourgondië* 56, 227, 285, for the entry in the inventory.
- 19 Finot J., *Inventaire sommaire des archives départementales antérieures à 1790, Nord: archives civiles, série B, vol. 8* (Lille: 1895) 432: 'Ung grand tableau de deux personnages nudz de Mars et Vénus [...] ung autre grand tableau de paincture d'une belle fille qui se déshabille'. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.
- 20 Sterk, *Philips van Bourgondië* 227: 'Een lit de camp mit een matras, een beddedeken, gardijnen ende anders, heel van geluwe ende blauw taftaf gestoffeert'. Cornelis Kiliaen describes 'taffetaf' as a type of silk dress (*bombycina vestis*). I believe 'taffetaf', in English taffeta, is close to what 'taftaf' signifies. See Cornelis Kiliaen, *Etymologicum teutonicae linguae* (Antwerp: Plantin Press, 1599). Digitalized by Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren, http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/kiliooietymo1_01/kiliooietymo1_01_0028.php.

painting, which likewise became an extension of the bed, and an adjunct to any pair or group of people who might view it. Thus, behind the actual bed drapery his amorous pursuits would have seemed to extend the pictorial scene, or, perhaps more precisely, to instantiate the unseen excitement of that scene behind the curtain, and to establish a reciprocal circuit of touch that was seen, enacted, and felt.

That circuit functioned in part as a way to erode the boundaries of depicted versus actual experience. The parallelism of materials, colour scheme, and contexts implies that the nude figures (likely Venus and Cupid) in the painting and the occupants of Philip's bed would have been regarded as partaking in analogous, if not conceptually intertwined, visual/tactile engagements. In such an event, the canopy of the bed could have been used to mask indecency, and, vice versa, the veil of the painting to lend privacy. The result is an exchange between picture and actuality, as if to efface the boundaries of mimesis. On the one hand, love-making was made to echo—perhaps even compete with—the provocativeness of the painted scene, in which the touch of Cupid's arrow supposedly spurred uncontrollable desire. On the other hand, the figures hiding behind the curtain would have seemed to become so animate that their entanglements required virtual disguise. In this context, Philip's sexual exploits would have extended as well as intensified the pictorial dramas that flanked them. In return, the enlivened painting would then have seemed to chime in with the sex in bed, boosting its audacity.

It is worth noting that one could interpret the description of Philip's painting in a different way. Though scholars have customarily regarded the scene as one including the figure of Cupid, the word *Cupido* could simply signify desire, zeal, or lust. Thus, the inventory entry could have described a scene of a woman holding an arrow, with the painting referring to Cupid indirectly while allegorizing desire itself. According to this interpretation, the drapery around Philip's bed would have playfully protected the occupants from being found and struck by the arrow, which would provoke or threaten to expose their lust. In choosing to shield his bed, Philip not only redoubled the privacy he would have enjoyed in the study, but also implicitly empowered that painted figure. The resulting exchange between the occupants of the bed and the painting would thus have moved beyond reciprocal emulation to an expansion and subsequent completion of the pictorial drama.

Here we must give sufficient attention to Philip's simultaneous veiling of his artwork and his bed, given the room itself already ensured the covering of its occupants. As a result, the extra privacy gained from the repeated veiling would have been more performative than functional. Depicted figures are necessarily indifferent to whether their acts are covered, and a painted panel

has no investment in concealment or revelation. By the same token, Philip and his partners would not have felt the need to hide themselves from those figures and those objects, however naughty they were actually being. Thus, veiling the painting, Philip intended to render the inanimate picture an animated spectacle whose enclosure provoked desire to seek visibility. In the meanwhile, veiling his own bed, he made his amorous pursuits a spectacle, and the figures voyeuristic viewers, who would threaten to draw back his curtain and, with prying eyes, satisfy their curiosity.

Philip's double masking created a game in which both figures and viewers might hide, seek, and, undoing each other's disguises, catch. (Implicit in this game is the understanding that one should always be caught.) Because of the fluidity between the observer and the observed, the painting and its beholders would have been brought into an exchange: enlivened, the figures of Venus and Cupid would also appear to be the observant rivals of the merry-making observers, who would likewise, with their own erotic spectacle, have entertained seductively their pictorial spectators. In its agonistic account of seduction, this exchange is reminiscent of the lovers' games (i.e., the game of chess) in the *Roman de la Rose*.²¹

As important as it was for vision to transcend veiling, veiling also conditioned visual experience. Interestingly enough, the Duurstede inventory also describes the furnishing of a small cottage by one of the city gates, called *Hoenrepoert*, where Philip regularly entertained female guests.²² Among the household items were 'two expensive, well-made paintings of illicit love affairs with a storage box in which one belongs'.²³ Certainly the storage box would have served to protect as well as cover the racy picture within.²⁴ Yet in a private room given over to sexual pleasure, such covering would have only reinforced, rather than withheld, the erotic efficacy of the painting. In the context of entertaining female partners, the opening of the box would have performed a ritualized overture to fantasy that could have initiated arousal, even before the

21 Cf. Kelly D., *Internal Difference and Meanings in the Roman de la Rose* (Madison, WI: 1995) 102–103; and Connolly M., "Chaucer and Chess", *The Chaucer Review* 29, 1 (1994) 42.

22 See Schrader, "Gossart's Mythological Nudes" 61, 64; and Sterk, *Philips van Bourgondië* 58.

23 'Twee costelicke taeffereelkens van de boelscap wel gedaen mit een custodie daer d'een in hoirt'; translated by Schrader, in Schrader, *ibid.* 61. See also Sterk, *ibid.* 136, 264. Though two paintings are mentioned here, for the purpose of my argument I shall focus on the one in the box.

24 Eric Jan Sluiter has pointed out, in "Emulating Sensual Beauty" 13 n. 44, that the word *boelscap* refers to either a loose woman or the act of love-making. The two paintings, especially the one in the box, would likely have presented particularly daring scenes of physical entanglements.

painting played its part. Moreover, gaining access to a restricted image, and thus partaking in the disclosure of clandestine knowledge, viewers would have been able to entertain the playful sense of transgression similar to the depicted illicit love affair. Given the resources and planning that went into the purchase and use of that box, it is reasonable to suggest that Philip was less interested in ashamedly hiding the painting than in slyly revealing it. Indeed he would have framed each viewing as a special, perhaps even singular, event. In so doing, he turned his guests into privileged voyeurs, if not enthralled accomplices to the covert sexual adventure. Such a pattern of seduction would be consistent with the character described by Geldenhouwer, who remarked that Philip was 'less hostile to whore-mongering' than many of his contemporaries.²⁵

The fact that the painting might have participated in, perhaps even shaped, Philip's sexual exploits was related as much to the painting's content as to the manner in which it was presented. Philip's manipulation of the image would have added to it new meanings, at least new functions, though those functions were ultimately dependent on the depicted subject. The notion of activation through manipulation has been explored in particular with regard to prints by scholars of early modern art. David S. Areford, for example, has stressed that the creation of an early modern print was not always the most decisive circumstance in shaping the print's meanings and functions. Prints were often edited, cut, and relocated by viewers who sought to transform these standardized images into personal objects.²⁶ More importantly, other images were designed from the outset to be manipulated, as Suzanne Karr Schmidt and Kimberly Nichols have demonstrated.²⁷ By applying different kinds of camouflage to images which themselves played with the idea of concealment, Philip enlivened his interactions with the paintings. Activated to encourage, exemplify, threaten, and augment sexual adventure, these works engaged viewers in ways that extended beyond some 'purely' visual experience. Entangled in the sex lives of viewers, erotic images demanded responses, attention of a sort not unlike that sought by an actual sexual partner.

Interestingly, Henry III was less interested in masking erotic imagery. De Beatis mentioned that *Hercules and Deianira*, along with a *Judgment of Paris* and, most likely, the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, was kept in a room decorated

25 Quoted in Schrader, "Gossart's Mythological Nudes" 65.

26 Areford D.S., "The Image in the Viewers' Hands: The Reception of Early Prints in Europe", *Studies in Iconography* 24 (2003) 5–42.

27 Karr Schmidt, S. – Nichols, K., *Altered and Adorned: Using Renaissance Prints in Daily Life* [exh. cat., Art Institute of Chicago] (New Haven: 2011) esp. 61–91.

with oak panels that were treated to resemble textile, perhaps camelhair.²⁸ The same type of paneling was also used to camouflage the entrance to a room possibly similar to the one where Henry held his Bacchic feasts, on that massive bed designed specifically for such purposes. De Beatis describes the resulting experience in telling terms:

There are a few rooms in which we notice a very ingenious secret and artifice, that is to say a repository in a corner well ornamented and wrought in the same aforementioned wood (i.e., oak), which also served to hide a door into another room, in a way that if one had not been told otherwise, he would never have thought that a door was there. There is also a big room where there is a bed which measures 34 palmi di canna in width and 26 in length (approximately 9 metres by 7 metres), with six bed-ends for heads and for feet, with sheets and a white blanket which we heard the said master had made on purpose so that, fond of frequent banquets and taking pleasure in seeing his guests inebriated, he threw them on the bed when they were so drunk that they could not stand on their feet.²⁹

It would have been no coincidence that De Beatis chose to mention artworks that make explicit references to sex. These paintings must have struck him as akin to what Henry pursued in that bed. Gathering drunken guests around himself, Henry would have created his own scene of indulgence. He entertained his guests with artworks as well as deceptively masked secret chambers that held additional thrills. In so doing, he fashioned them into protagonists remarkably similar to those in the pictorial spectacles with which he surrounded himself. Thus, while Philip treated his paintings as animated partners, Henry manipulated his guests to, in some sense, animate the paintings around them and, in the process, wittily channelled the spectatorial experience of erotic imagery into the living of an erotic life.

28 Pastor, *Die Reise des Kardinals Luigi d'Aragona* 116: 'De tavole de rovere che son vaghissime nudate in modo di ciambellocto'.

29 Ibid. 116–117: 'Vi sono alcune camere, dove ce notaimo un secreto et artificio molto ingenioso, zo è un reposto in un cantone bene ornato et lavorato del medesimo legname che è decto di sopra, che servea anche per serrare una porta che intrava in l'altra camera, de modo che chi non ne fusse stato advertito, non se haria mai pensato vi fusse stata porta alcuna. Vi è anche una gran camera dove è un lecto di larghezza di palmi XXXIIII di canna et di longhezza XXVI ad ordine, con soi capezzali di capo et di piedi, con linzoli et una cultra biancha, quale intesimo chel predicto signore fe fare ad effecto che delectandose di stare spesso in banchecti, et havero piacere di vedore inbriachi li invitati, come erano tanto pieni che non possevano stare più in piedi, li faceva buctare sopra il dicto lecto'.

Artworks as Espionage

Showing the goddess musing on her reflected nudity, the Rovigo *Venus* seems to depict a moment when she steps out of a bath. For this reason, Stephanie Schrader has suggested that Gossaert's painting might have hung in a bathhouse, perhaps in the Wijnendale castle of Philip of Cleves, whose inventory mentions just such a scenario.³⁰ In this context where the theme of bathing would have been reflexively addressed, the painting would have done more than mirroring its spectatorial context, which similarly echoed what the painting showed. It would have also called to mind the physical experience of being naked, which renders the body more fully available to touch. To occupants of the bathhouse, the provocative figure of Venus would have augmented the sensuousness of bathing. Given the indulgent environment in which the painting originally hung, the gaze and touch of its protagonist would have paralleled as well as prompted the bathers' own looking and touching. As a result, the Rovigo *Venus* would have seemed to recapitulate as well as oversee sensuous indulgences.

Both Philip of Cleves and Philip of Burgundy thus approached their respective paintings in similarly erotic ways. In order to understand the complexity of the entanglements at stake, it is worth turning to Erving Goffman's notion of 'expression games', specifically that of 'moves' involved in espionage. After all, erotic engagement frequently involves strategies analogous to those native to espial. Intelligence and counter-intelligence deploy five basic moves, according to Goffman; three are especially important to this essay. The first is the *covering move*, through which 'the subject attempts to influence the conclusions that the observer comes to'.³¹ The second is the *uncovering move*, where 'the observer, suspecting [...] obfuscation or misrepresentation [...] can attempt to crack, pierce, penetrate, and otherwise get behind the apparent facts in order to uncover the real ones'.³² And the third is the *counter-uncovering move*, where the subjects become 'aware that they must mask their actions and words, so they can appreciate that the controls they employ may be suspected, the covers they use penetrated, and that it may be necessary to attempt to meet this attack by countering actions'.³³ All three seem to have been operational in and around Gossaert's paintings in their original contexts.

30 Schrader, "Gossart's Mythological Nudes" 66.

31 Goffman E., *Strategic Interaction* (Philadelphia: 1969) 17.

32 Ibid. 17–18.

33 Ibid. 19.

In the residences of Philip of Cleves and Philip of Burgundy, erotic paintings were arranged to confront viewers, as if to convert the depicted figures into percipient rivals, gazing upon the viewers. Such a situation is distinctly akin to espionage, where both parties wish to see and not to be seen. Yet in the context of eroticism, contrary to full deception, the intent is to implement selective visibility and selective concealment. Even in the case of Henry III's secret chambers, the camouflage for which was notably successful, the objective was not to render the rooms incognito, but to make them an open secret for those in the know. Henry's deception of his guests was particularly analogous to the counter-uncovering move; he would have cunningly cultivated their suspicion of the rooms' disguise (and relished the moment when the disguise was revealed to them). Such settings, in which hierarchies of clandestine knowledge played an important role, would have augmented the seductive appeal of Gossaert's works, provoking viewers to interact with the illusorily animated figures. A dynamic arose in which viewers and objects appeared to grapple with, and not just observe, one another.

In conclusion, Gossaert's highly sensuous mythological figures call for a type of viewing that engages optic as well as haptic sensitivities. The artist's virtuoso corporeal treatment of the body and his depictions of sophisticated bodily intertwinement lure the viewer to imagine the feel of the body, which spurs the desire to touch the as-if-living figures. Moreover, primary sources have established that Gossaert's patrons, interested in enacting the paintings' seduction, often manipulated them in ways that augmented their sexual appeal. They kept these paintings in intimate places, and in those places either camouflaged or conspicuously displayed them, thus treating the depicted figures as enlivened individuals. Complementing the liveliness of Gossaert's figures, these variously built spectatorial contexts extended the pictorial narratives into realms of actuality, in which the figures, appearing to affect the viewer with their painted acts, would have entertained him as virtual sexual partners.

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The Trope of Anthropomorphosis in Hendrick Goltzius's *Venus and Cupid* (1590), *Venus, Bacchus, and Ceres* (1593), and *Portrait of Frederick de Vries* (1597)

Walter S. Melion

This article examines three allegories of art, two erotic, one parental, that feature a curious prosopopoeic device: within these images, one or more faces are discernible in things of nature, such as trees, or natural phenomena, such as vaporous flame or an earthen ridge. These are versions of an age-old rhetorical figure—prosopopoeia or, better, personification—that Goltzius has altered in crucial ways: whereas prosopopoeia, in its traditional form, involved speaking through a person or, sometimes, a thing other than oneself, and personification involved giving speech to a humanized animal or thing, Goltzius anthropomorphizes things and phenomena, and yet allows them to remain both silent and for the most part unaltered. Faces are seen to materialize in a tree, a hillock, or a pyre, but the material medium whence these faces emerge is never fully humanized. The result is a *compositio mixta* or *chimaera*, whose component parts are never reconciled and instead appear mutually transformative, so that the human element seems always to be issuing from the natural or phenomenal substance that contains it. Typically, the anthropomorphic device is partially hidden, discernible if one looks attentively, but never easily or obviously apparent. Goltzius, following the model of painters such as Herri met de Bles, challenges the beholder to find the human faces and, having found them, to consider how their presence inflects the pictorial argument he is adducing. In what follows, I ask how anthropomorphosis operates and what it signifies in the *Venus and Cupid* of 1590, the *Venus, Bacchus, and Ceres* of 1593, and the *Portrait of Frederick de Vries* of 1597.

1 “Eros and Love’s Body in the *Venus and Cupid* of 1590”

Venus and Cupid is a *poëterij* (‘poetic fable’) that celebrates the power of erotic love, bodied forth by Venus and Cupid, to mobilize the generative potency of

art and nature [Fig. 6.1].¹ This dual potency is epitomized, on the one hand, by the event that unfolds within the mythological landscape, and, on the other, by the *teyckenconst* ('art of delineation') that the draughtsman, Hendrick Goltzius, displays meta-reflexively in his drawing.² Contemporaries such as Goltzius's close friend, the art theoretician Karel van Mander, utilized the term *penwercken* ('epitomes of penmanship') to designate drawings of this type, rendered in the manner of engraving, with multiple layers of concentric hatches that gradually swell and taper along their orbital trajectories.³ The consummate mastery epitomized by such *penwercken*, or more accurately, their *handelingh* ('handling'), secured for Goltzius the nicknames 'Proteus or Vertumnus of art', epithets coined by the artist's admirers to encapsulate his ability imitatively to transform mere lines into the persuasive depiction of whatsoever he wished

- 1 On *Venus and Cupid*, see Reznicek E.K.J., *Die Zeichnungen von Hendrick Goltzius*, Utrechtse Kunsthistorische Studiën 6, 2 vols. (Utrecht: 1961) 11 281; idem, *Hendrick Goltzius Drawings Rediscovered, 1962–1992: Supplement to "Die Zeichnungen von Hendrick Goltzius"* (New York: 1993) 83; and Bleyerfeld Y., "Hendrick Goltzius, *Venus and Cupid* 1590", in Belyerveld Y. – Elen A.J. – Niessen J. et al., *Bosch to Bloemaert: Early Netherlandish Drawings in Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen*, Rotterdam [exh. cat., Fondation Custodia, Paris] (Paris – Bussum: 2014) 196–197. On the *poëterij*, see Mander Karel van, "T'leven van Ioan de Mabuse, Schilder", in idem, *Het Schilder-Boeck, waer in voor eerst de leerlustighe iueght den grondt der edel vry schilderconst in verscheyden deelen wort voorghedragen. Daer nae in dry deelen t'leven der vermaerde doortuchtighe schilders des ouden, en nieuwen tyds. Eynthyck d'wtleggginghe op den Metamorphoseon Pub. Ovidij Nasonis. Oock daerbeneffens wtbeeldinghe der figueren. Alles dienstich en nut den schilders, constbeminners en dichters, oock allen staten van menschen* (Alkmaar – Haarlem, Jacob de Meester, voor Passchier van Westbusch; 1604), fol. 225 verso.
- 2 On Van Mander's critical category *teyckenconst*, as it pertains to Goltzius, see Melion W.S., *Shaping the Netherlandish Canon: Karel van Mander's "Schilder-Boeck"* (Chicago – London: 1991) 23, 34–35, 43–51, 168, 209, 219–221, 227–235.
- 3 On the *penwerck*, see Mander Karel van, "T'leven van Henricus Goltzius, uytmemende Schilder, Plaetsnijder, en Glaes-schrijver, van Mulbracht", in *Het Schilder-Boeck IV: Het leven der doortuchtighe Nederlandtsche, en Hoogh-duytsche schilders*, fol. 285 verso. Van Mander reserves the term for epitomes of *teyckenconst* rendered by Goltzius in pen and ink on parchment or canvas, on which see Melion W.S., "Love and Artisanishp in Hendrick Goltzius's *Venus, Bacchus, and Ceres* of 1606", *Art History* 16 (1993) 60–94, esp. 62–63; Miedema H. (ed.), *Karel van Mander: The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, trans. D. Cook-Radmore, 6 vols. (Doornspijk: 1998) v 207–208; Nichols L., *The 'Pen Works' of Hendrick Goltzius* [exh. cat., Philadelphia Museum of Art], *Bulletin Philadelphia Museum of Art* 88, nos. 373–374 (Philadelphia: 1991); and Leeftang H., "His Arful Pen: Pen Works, Sketches, Chalk Drawings 1587–1614", in Leeftang H. – Luijten G. et al., *Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617): Drawings, Prints, and Paintings* [exh. cat., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Toledo Museum of Art] (Amsterdam – New York – Toledo – Zwolle: 2003) 235–246, 248–250, 261–263.



FIGURE 6.1 *Hendrick Goltzius, Venus and Cupid, 1590. Pen and brown ink on paper.*
 376 × 297 mm.
 MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN, ROTTERDAM.

to portray.⁴ *Venus and Cupid* features emergent anthropomorphic devices that comment upon the theme of generative potency variously explored by the protean Goltzius.

4 On Goltzius as Proteus or Vertumnus of art, see Van Mander, "T'leven van Henricus Goltzius", in *Het Schilder-Boeck* IV, fol. 285 recto.

Based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* v 346–384, *Venus and Cupid* situates the god and goddess on the slopes of Mount Eryx in Sicily, where, engrossed in one another, they engage in the action of mutual seduction.⁵ Their crossed heads, arms, and legs, linked hands, and rotating bodies perfectly correspond or, better, visibly issue from the linear network of criss-crossing and circuitous hatches from which they are constituted and, concomitantly, into which they resolve. This is to say that they embody the conversion of mere *handelingh* into a poetic fiction, and per contra, of a fictive image into its constituent graphemes, or, put differently, of lines into the forms they constitute and, complementarily, of these forms into the lines by which they are comprised. These pictorial maneuvers, by turns constitutive and deconstitutive, bear witness to the thematic of generative emergence and de-generative resolution, around which the *penwerck*, as a whole and in its parts, turns. Venus, having caught sight of Pluto, whose quadriga appears in the left background, pleads with Cupid to fire his sharpest arrow at the lord of the underworld, thus ensuring that Hades itself succumbs to love. Pluto, as Ovid explains, has been surveying Sicily, worried lest the storm-giant Typhoeus, pinioned beneath the island, should rupture its foundations. Instead, the poet implies, the foundations of Hades itself shall be breached by Venus and Cupid. The rape of Proserpina is the direct consequence of their joint intervention.⁶

Goltzius trawled the major mythographic handbooks—Lilio Gregorio Gyraldi's *De deis gentium varia et multiplex historia* (ed. princeps, 1548), Vincenzo Cartari's *Imagini colla spoxizione de i dei de gliantichi* (ed. princeps, 1556), and Natalis Comes's *Mythologiae* (ed. princeps, 1567)—and undoubtedly also consulted Van Mander, who was himself compiling an Ovidian handbook, *Wtlegghingh op den Metamorphosis Pub. Ovidij Nasonis* (*Commentary on the Metamorphoses of Publius Ovidius Naso*, ed. princeps, 1604), in order to amplify his *penwerck* with references to Venus and Cupid as agents of amorous passion in full force.⁷ They are deeply shadowed to indicate that the goddess

5 Ovidius Publius Naso, *Metamorphoses*, trans. J.M. Miller, Loeb Classical Library 42–43, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA – London: 1984) 1 262–265. Cf. *P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoseon, id est transformationum libri XV* (Lyon, In aedibus Melchioris et Gasparis Trechsel fratrum: 1583) 115–116.

6 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1 264–267. Cf. *P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoseon* 116–117.

7 The *Wtlegghingh*, Part V of Van Mander's art theoretical treatise *Het Schilder-Boeck*, consists of commentaries on the fifteen books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. On Venus and Cupid, see Giraldi Lilius Gregorius, *De deis gentium varia & multiplex Historia, in qua simul de eorum imaginibus & cognominibus agitur* (Basil, Joannis Oporinus: 1548) 531–557, 557–565; Cartari Vincenzo, *Le imagini de gli Dei de gli Antichi* (Venice, Evangelista Deuchino: 1625) 360–386, 387–405; and Comes Natalis, *Mythologiae, sive explicationis fabularum libri decem* (Padua, Petrumpaulus Tozzius, 1616) 202–213, 213–221.

before us is not celestial Venus but her earthly twin, Venus Melaena (Black Venus), who, Van Mander states, inhabits solitary places (such as Mount Eryx) and from there engineers works of the flesh.⁸ She fondles Cupid's genitals, striving physically to arouse him, thereby to show that he, the instrument of her power, is the 'fiery heat' that men bring to sexual intercourse.⁹ Their wind-swept drapery alludes to the notion that Venus, who is the 'innate desire instilled by Nature' that impels 'all living things to reproduce', comes most to fruition when the springtime winds gently blow, Aura departing and Zephyr advancing.¹⁰ Even their distance from Pluto betokens love's authority, signifying that love, when it waxes invincible, strikes from afar.¹¹ Her besotted expression, all eyes for Cupid, agape, and smiling, characterizes Venus as *Aphrosyne*, that is, excitable and prone to the folly of love, as well as *Philomedeia*, flighty and quick to laugh.¹² The embroidered *cestus* (girdle), just beneath her breasts, connotes her status as voluptuary goddess of lasciviousness, who, whenever love threatens to abate, 'enflames it, as if with flint and tinder'.¹³ Her serpentine pose, like Cupid's, since it can be read both as turning toward and turning

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- 8 Van Mander, *Het Schilder-Boeck V: Wtleghghingh op den Metamorphosis Pub. Ovidij Nasonis*, fol. 30 recto: 'D'ander is de jongste dochter van Iuppiter en Dione, dese wort ghenoeemt volcksche, vleeschlijcke, wellustige, gemeenlijck haer onthoudende in eensaem holen en docker plaetsen, om dat haer wercken verborgen willen wesen'. Cf. fol. 29 recto: 'Mitheenna hietse Scotia Venus, nae de duysternis, nae een eensaem doncker plaetse, daer sy een heerlijcke feest hadde, oft om dat haer wercken in duyster geschieden'.
- 9 Ibid., fol. 8 recto: '[...] doch niet sonder Cupido, die men mach noemen, de Liefde, oft Manlijck toedoen, oft een vyerige hitte, oft eyndlijck een Godtlijcke cracht, die aller schepselen wasdom gheeft, nae dat Empedocles seght'.
- 10 Van Mander cites Lucretius as his source; see *ibid.*, fol. 31 recto: 'Eyndlijck nu, Venus en is niet anders als de verborgen begeerlijckheyt en lust, die de Natuere bestelt en ghevoeght heeft in alderley dieren, tot voort-teelinghe: waer van wy claer bewijs hebben, als de Lentische laeuwicheyt der locht alle dingen gheneghen maeckt, en verweckt te teelen zijns ghelijck. Waerom Lucretius t'koel windeken Aura, en t'geblas des Westen windts oft Zephyri, seght te wesen boden oft voorlopers van Venus'.
- 11 Ibid., fol. 8 verso: 'Xenophon seght, dat de Liefden zijn schutters geheeten, om dieswille dat de schoone Menschen van verre quetsen mogen'.
- 12 Ibid., fols. 28 verso–29 recto: '[...] maer haren naem heeft oock oorsprong van t'woort Aphrosyne, t'welck gheseyt is sotheyt, en beroeringe des geests. [...] Sy was noch gheheeten Philomedeia, oft Philomeides Aphrodite, dat is, de lachliuende Venus, lachsaeam, oft lachbaer, als die niet en begeert als lacchen en vroylijckheyt'.
- 13 Ibid., fol. 29 recto: '[...] gelijck veel sulcke dingen in haren gordel Cestus waren uytgebeelt: want hy was vol soeticheyte, vriendelijcke woordkens, goetgonsticheyt, lieflijckheyt, wijsmakinge, en cleen minne-bedrogh gheweuen oft gevlochten [...] eygen oft bequaem de lesschende liefde t'ontsteken, gelijck met vyerslagh en baenst [...]']

away from, further enhances the message of the *cestus*, which conveys 'love's contrary motions', 'joy and sorrow', 'favor and indignation', 'conjunction and rejection', 'concord and dissension'.¹⁴

Goltzius would also seem to have rendered Venus and Cupid precisely as François Habert describes them in his paraphrase of Ovid, *Les quinze livres le la Metamorphose* (s.d.). In Habert's version, as in Goltzius's, their conjugation produces an infinitude of strength:

Si i'ay honneur par ta force infinie
Qui à la mienne est vivement unie,
Bende ton arc, pour Proserpine poindre
Et à Pluton son oncle la conioindre.¹⁵

Cupid signals his assent by gazing into the eyes of Venus:

Amour voyant Venus qui le supplie,
Saisist son arc, & sa Trousse deslie.¹⁶

Likewise indicative of love's ascendancy are the gifts of Bacchus and Ceres visible at Venus's feet—ripened bunches of grape, ears of wheat, and gourds—that call to mind the famous apothegm of Terence (*Eunuchus* IV 1.1 v), 'Without Ceres and Bacchus, Venus freezes', made famous by Erasmus in the *Adagia* (II iii 97).¹⁷ But more important than these many references to the triumph of love is the pointed allusion to the 'Proem' from Lucretius's *De rerum natura*, the so-called 'Hymn to Venus' that inaugurates the poem. Goltzius's Cupid, enraptured by the sight of Venus, his head thrown back as he listens to her

14 Ibid., fol. 29 recto-verso: '[...] met alderley strijdige tegenstandicheden [...] aenlockingen der liefden, en liefdighe veronweerdicheyt, en goetgonstighe onthalinghe, weyderinge, soete grijnekens oft lachskens, minnebreuck, en versoeninge, spiticheyt, vriendelijck toelaet, harde antwoordt, hope, wanhope, lacchen, schreyen, vreucht, verdriet, en ander dergelijcke vernieuwinge der prickelingen [...]'].

15 Habert François d'Yssouldun en Berry, *Les quinze livres de la Metamorphose d'Ovide interpretez en rime Françoise, selon la phrase Latine*. [...] *Nouvellement enrichis de figures non encores pay cy devant imprimeés* (Rouen, Thomas Mallard: 1580) 297.

16 Ibid.

17 On the adage, 'Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus', see Mynors R.A.B. (ed. – trans.), *Collected Works of Erasmus: Adages II i 1 to II vi 100* (Toronto – Buffalo – London: 1991) 187–188; and Erasmus D., *The Adages of Erasmus*, ed. W. Barker (Toronto – Buffalo – London: 2001) 177–179.

blandishments and draws near to kiss her parted lips, is the spitting image of Lucretius's Mars tamed by love of his paramour:

The savage works of battle, puissant Mars,
How often to thy bosom flings his strength
O'rmastered by the eternal wound of love—
And there, with eyes and full throat backward thrown,
Gazing, my Goddess, open-mouthed at thee,
Pastures on love his greedy sight, his breath
Hanging upon thy lips (l 31–37).¹⁸

As the goddess' ability to subjugate puissant Mars confirms her fecundity and invincibility, so in the *penwerck* her power over Pluto is confirmed by the enamourment of Cupid. Goltzius compounds the Lucretian imagery by reference to Habert's account of Venus and Cupid:

Avec son fils voulant, qu'elle semond
De doux baisers, puis l'embrasse & le baise,
En luy disant ces propos à son aise.¹⁹

Cupid, in pointing at the viewer, insists that he too will soon be targeted: the dominion exercised by Venus is universal, for it encompasses us no less than Pluto amongst her conquests.

What, then, does one make of the anthropomorphic faces discernible at right? One face emerges from the tree trunk: part human, part leonine or, perhaps, canine, it leers beside Venus's left elbow, in a parodic echo of her wide-eyed, open-mouthed visage. Another face, its features masklike, with shadowed eyes and mouth, peers from out of the surface of her diaphanous sleeve, near the bend of her arm and forearm. A third face, merry, moustachioed, with prominent nose and beetling brow, appears in profile at the tip of the drape fluttering next to her left thigh. Yet another, elongated and triangular,

18 Lucretius Titus Carus, *On the Nature of Things*, trans. W.E. Leonard, http://classics.mit.edu/Carus/nature_things.i.i.html. Cf. Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, ed. Lambin 5:

[...] quoniam bellifera moenera Mavors.
Armipotens regit: in gremium qui saepe tuum se.
Reiicit aeterno devinctus volnere amoris:
Atque ita suspiciens teretis cervice reposta.
Pascit amore avidos inhians in te, dea, visus:
Eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore.

19 Habert, *Les quinze livres de la Metamorphose d'Ovide* 296.

the junction of its brows and nose reduced to a y-shape, its thin lips pursed, takes shape from the folds of this same cloth. Other faces, less determinate, float within the network of gridded or swirling lines, their inchoate physiognomies barely detectable. All these countenances are hybrids, their lineaments bestial *and* hominoid, their expressions caricatural. Why do they proliferate in close proximity to Venus and Cupid, bringing inanimate substances such as wood and fabric to life? And why, in animating these substances, do they seem to elide the distinction between one material and another, indiscriminately vivifying a knot of rootage or a crush of cloth?

These anthropomorphic phenomena serve first of all as attributes of Venus and Cupid who are seen to gain strength in concert. They confirm that Cupid is the god who, in Van Mander's words, causes 'all created things to grow', and, collaterally, they attest that Venus, true to her name—*Venus* from the Latin verb *venire*—causes 'all things to come forth', that is, infuses with life whatsoever she approaches.²⁰ The trope of nature responsively enlivened by Venus ultimately derives from Lucretius, who avers in *De rerum natura* that the earth—*Daedala tellus*—becomes Daedalic in the goddess' presence, its powers of artifice heightened by her animating spirit (1 7–8).²¹ Denis Lambin, in his classic gloss on this passage, equates Venus's Daedalic efficacy with the metamorphic sorcery of the goddess Circe, as described by Virgil.²² Lambin adds, with regard to Lucretius's avowal, 'for thee waters of the unvexed deep smile' (1 8), that so mighty is Venus that she quickens inanimate things, making them smile.²³ The grinning and leering faces adduced by Goltzius as signs of love's potency, descend from this Lucretian imagery of mighty Venus.

20 Van Mander, *Het Schilder-Boeck V: Wtleghingh*, fol. 8 recto: '[...] een Godtlijcke cracht, die aller schepselen wasdom gheeft'; *ibid.*, fol. 29 recto: '[...] dat den eygen naem Venus by den Latijnen zijnen oorsprong oft eygenschap heeft van het comen, dat sy tot alle dinghen comt, oft om dat alle dingen door haer voortcomen'.

21 Lucretius Titus Carus, *De rerum natura libri sex [...] locis innumerabilibus ex auctoritate quinque codicum manu scriptorum emendati, atque in antiquum ac nativum statum fere restituti, & praeterea brevibus, & perquam utilibus commentariis illustrati*, ed. Dionysius Lambinus (Paris – Lyons, Gulielmus Rovillius – Philippus G. Rouillius Nep.: 1564) 1:

Te, dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila caeli.
Adventumque tuum: tibi suavis Daedala tellus.
Summittit flores, tibi rident aequora ponti,
Placatumque nitet diffuso lumine caelum.

22 *Ibid.* 3: '*Daedala tellus*: Festus, "Daedalam a varietate rerum artificiorumque dictum esse apud Lucretium terram, apud Ennium Minervan, apud Virgilium Circen, facile est intelligere [...]. Quod si quis malit hoc nomen a Daedalo praestantissimo fabro ductum esse, non pugnabo'.

23 *Ibid.*: '*Rident*: [...]. vel iccirco res inanimae ridere dicuntur eae [...]'.

The opening of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* provided Goltzius with a further warrant for the use of anthropomorphic devices. Ovid limns the condition of Chaos that reigned before the Creator separated the four elements and initiated the universal process of differentiation. Chaotic nature is likened to a face, forming yet formless, that subsumes every species of thing: 'Before the sea was, the face of Nature ("naturae vultus") showed alike in her whole round, which state have men called chaos [...]. No form of things remained the same; all objects were at odds, for within one body cold things strove with hot, and moist with dry, soft things with hard, things having weight with weightless things' (*Metamorphoses* I 5–6, 17–20).²⁴ In his popular illustrated edition of the *Metamorphoses* (1559), Gabriele Symeoni conflated this account of Chaos with the well-known couplet from Book II of the *Ars amatoria*: 'First there was a confused mass of things, without order, and heaven, earth, and sea had but a single face ("unaeque erat facies")' (*Ars amatoria* II 467–68) [Fig. 6.2].²⁵ Goltzius likely studied the adjacent woodcut roundel, which consists of eddying forms that resemble enlaced clouds, flames, currents of air and water, and stony outcroppings; embedded within these shapes, amorphous faces hover intradermally without any fixed orientation [Fig. 6.3]. Goltzius may also have consulted the grotesques, partly human, partly animal, that enframe the whole page and associate the 'order' of chaos with hybridity, tout court. Habert, for his part, construes Chaos as a 'conjunction of multitudinous things in one

24 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Miller, I 2–3. Cf. *P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoseon* 1–2:

Ante mare & terras, &, quod tegit omnia, coelum.
Unus erat toto naturae vultus in orbe,
Quem dixere Chaos, rudis indigestaque moles,
Nec quicquam, nisi pondus iners, congestaque eodem.
Non bene iunctarum discordia semina rerum.

25 Symeoni Gabriele, *La vita et metamorfoseo d'Ovidio, figurato & abbreviato in forma d'Epigrammi* (Lyons, Giovanni di Tornese: 1559) 13:

"La Creatione & confusione del Mondo".
Prima ch'il gran fattor dell'Universo.
Con pietà gli ponesse intorno mente,
Era cieco nel Mar l'Aer sommerso [sommerse?],
Nel centro il Fuoco, e'l tutto era niente,
Ch' ogni elemento, di virtù diverso,
Non havea luogo à lui conveniente:
Ma del verbo divin l'amor profondo.
D'un CAOS ordinò sì bello il Mondo.

Cf. Ovid, *Ars amatoria*, ed. R. Ehwald,

<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/ovid/ovid.artis2.shtml>:

Prima fuit rerum confusa sine ordine moles,
Unaeque erat facies sidera, terra, fretum.

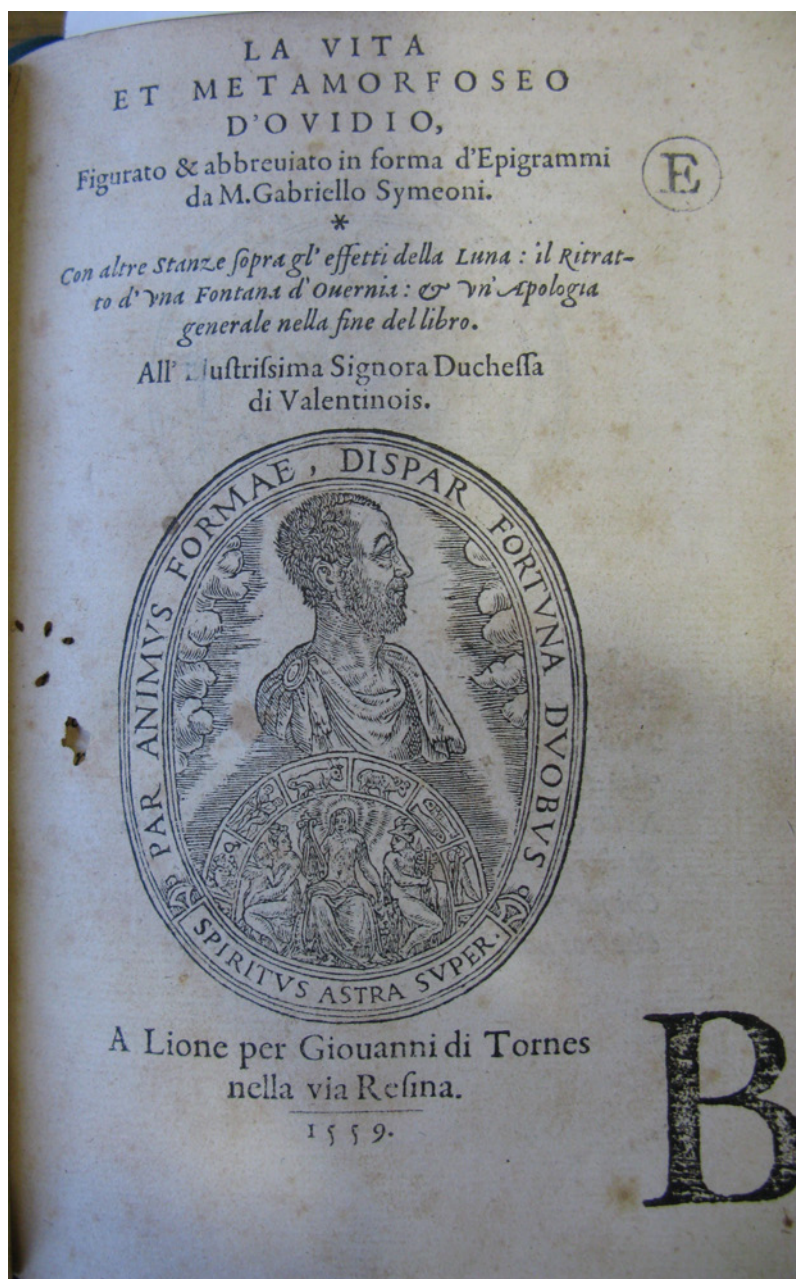


FIGURE 6.2 *Gabriele Symeoni, La vita et metamorfoseo d'Ouidio, figurato & abbreviato in forma d'Epigrammi da M. Gabriello Symeoni (Lyons, Jean de Tornes: 1559), duodecimo.*

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FIGURE 6.3 Anonymous, Chaos, 1559. Woodcut. In Gabriel Syméon, *La vita et metamorfoseo d'Ouidio, figurato & abbreviato in forma d'Epigrammi* da M. Gabriello Symeoni (Lyons: Jean de Tournes, 1559), duodecimo. THE NEWBERRY LIBRARY, CHICAGO.

body', 'an entanglement of admirable discords', in which the 'things of the earth are mobile rather than fixed', and 'the soft and the hard, the light and the heavy do battle with each other'.²⁶ The emergent faces in Goltzius's *Venus and Cupid* closely coordinate with this Ovidian imagery of Chaos: forming yet formless, mobile rather than fixed, they transgress the limits of elements and of species; entangled in the surfaces of wood or cloth, they by turns appear opaque or transparent, hard or soft, heavy or light. They can be interpreted as allusions to the chaos that ensues when love, its strength unchecked, hits the mark, brooking no resistance. Ovid's trope of Chaos as *facies* (face) and *vultus* (countenance), licensed Goltzius's anthropomorphizing allusions to the chaos that Venus and Cupid are about to unleash as their mutual love intensifies. The association amongst Venus, Cupid, and Chaos would have been further underscored by Van Mander, who states in the *Wtlegghingh* that 'divine Cupid, as the poets say, was once co-mingled with Chaos'.²⁷

The emergence of the faces in Goltzius's drawing also doubles as an attribute of the invincible artist, whose sharpened quill, like Cupid's arrow, has the power to pierce the beholder, inducing him to love this exceptional *penwerck*. Ovid's portrayal of Chaos, after all, forms part of the opening invocation to the gods, whom the poet asks to breath life into his undertaking—the telling of stories about 'bodies changed into new forms'—just as the Creator transformed Chaos into harmony (*Metamorphoses* 1 1–4).²⁸ The 'changemens difformes', as Habert puts it in his paraphrase of Ovid's exordium, that the poet desires to capture, can be compared to the metamorphic forms that Goltzius evokes by means of mutable lines.²⁹ His ability to quicken dead marks, to convert them into *facies* and *vultus* redolent of love's chaotic ascendancy, to make these faces smile, recalls Lambin's gloss on Lucretius's praise of Venus the smile-bringer: 'By their equability and tranquility, [the oceans] manifest a certain joy [at the

26 Habert, *Les quinze livres de la Metamorphose d'Ovide* 14–15.

27 Van Mander, *Het Schilder-Boeck V: Wtlegghingh*, fol. 8 verso: 'Hierom werdt versiert by den Poeten, dat Cupido, den Hemelschen geheeten, van eerst aen is vermencht gheweest in den Chaos'.

28 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Miller, 1 1–4. Cf. *P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoseon* 1: In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas.
Corpora. Dij coeptis, nam vos mutastis & illas,
Aspirate meis, primaque ab origine mundi.
Ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen.

29 Habert, *Les quinze livres de la Metamorphose d'Ovide* 13: Constant vouloir vient ma Muse inciter.
A doctement escrire & reciter.
Les corps, qui ont par changemens difformes.
Diversement receu nouvelles formes.

advent of Venus]. This is transferred [by Lucretius] from animate things endowed with reason, that signify their joy by smiling: '[...] for on this account inanimate things are said to smile when they are ornate, splendid, agreeable, composed, and untroubled; for just as those who smile are gladdened with joy and laughter, so too, things beautiful in aspect, brilliant, and exquisite, gladden the spectator with joy'.³⁰ By the same token, Goltzius may be said to have anthropomorphized his *penwerck*, to have animated something inanimate, to have made a drawing smile.

2 On the Potency of Art and Nature in the *Venus, Bacchus, and Ceres* of 1593

At every stage of his career as *teyckenaer* ('draughtsman') and *schilder* ('painter'), Goltzius explored the thematic of artifice, as it bears upon the relation between art and nature. His *Venus, Bacchus, and Cupid* of 1593, like the *Venus and Cupid* of 1590, is a *penwerck* ('pen-work') that turns on the presence of a natural prodigy—more precisely, four such 'miracles' of nature—the appearance of facial likenesses in bark, earth, flame, and flesh [Figs. 6.1 & 6.4]. The *penwerck* in question itself constitutes something prodigious, an epitome of artifice, and, as such, comments meta-pictorially on the subject of artifice that it also mythologizes: drawn in pen and various shades of brown ink on parchment, it consists entirely of concentric hatches and cross-hatches, delineated in Goltzius's signature burin-hand; relying neither on contour lines nor tonal washes, he yet manages to describe a wide spectrum of textures and to capture fugitive effects of reflected light and penumbral shadow.³¹ In places, such as the female nude's midriff or the male nude's upper arm, he depicts even subtler

30 Lucretius, *De rerum natura libri sex*, ed. Lambin, 3: 'Sua aequabilitate, & tranquillitate hilaritatem quandam prae se ferunt. Tralatio est a rebus animatis, & ratione praeditis, quae risu hilaritatem significant: vel iccirco res inanimatae ridere dicuntur eae, quae sunt ornatae, magnificae, bellae, placidae, tranquillae, quod quemadmodum qui rident, risu, & hilaritate diffunduntur, ita & res aspectu pulchrae, & nitentes, & politae, hilaritate diffundunt spectatorem'.

31 On the *Venus, Bacchus, and Ceres*, lauded by Van Mander as a paragon of both *teyckenconst* and *reflexy-const* (art of reflection), see *Het Schilder-Boeck I: Den grondt der edel vry Schilder-const*, fol. 33 recto; and "T'leven van Henricus Goltzius", in *Het Schilder-Boeck IV*, fol. 285 recto. On this *penwerck*, see Reznicek, *Zeichnungen von Hendrick Goltzius* I 102–103, 286–287, no. 129; Miedema H. (ed. – trans.), *Karel van Mander, Den grondt der edel vry schilder-const*, 2 vols. (Utrecht: 1973) II 529–530; Nichols, 'Pen-Works' of Hendrick Goltzius 12–14; and Leeftang H., "Sine Cerere et Libero friget Venus, 1593", in Leeftang – Luijten et al., *Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617): Drawings, Prints, and Paintings* 248–250, no. 87.



FIGURE 6.4 *Hendrick Goltzius, Venus, Bacchus, and Ceres, 1593. Pen and brown ink on parchment. 630 × 495 mm.*

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effects of re-reflected light that scintillates from surface to surface. Although the *penwerck* is ostensibly monochrome, it evokes a full palette of colors, not least the changeable coloring of flesh, flame, foliage, and bark. This epitome of Goltzius's *teyckenconst* ('art of delineation') is another *poëterij*—a poetical subject, that is, a mythological fiction.³² The central figure is Venus, the flanking figures Bacchus and Ceres, both of whom offer their gifts to the goddess: the wine god's presentation of grapes and the goddess of agriculture's presentation of a produce-laden cornucopia, enliven the goddess of love, warming her, supplying the food and drink that brings eros to life. In response, she starts to smile, becoming, before our very eyes, Philomeides Aphrodite—Venus the joyful goddess who rejoices in laughter. The three divinities enact the familiar proverb popularized by the Roman playwright Terence in the *Eunuchus*, and disseminated widely, as mentioned above, by Erasmus in the *Adagia*: 'Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus' ('Without Ceres and Bacchus, Venus grows cold').³³ Erasmus considered this adage 'very neat' because its every part 'enshrines a metaphor': just as food and drink convert desire into passion, so the conversion of Ceres and Bacchus into images of love's instruments, and of Venus into an image of burning desire, wittily and vividly illustrates the truism that food and drink are the things that stimulate lasciviousness.³⁴ At Venus's feet, Cupid stokes a small fire fueled by ears of wheat and vine tendrils, and this flame, which signifies burgeoning love, casts a brilliant glow on Venus and the attendant deities. Very brightly lit are the draped fabric shielding her pudendum and the heart-shaped pendant decorating her *cestus*, the girdle that signifies seductive love's irresistible charms.³⁵

Emerging from the vaporous smoke of Cupid's fire is one of the many prodigies of natural artifice that populate the picture: a half-formed, snub-nosed face with slanted eyes emanates from the smoky exhalation. Upon closer inspection, other faces become evident: the silhouette of the ledge upon which Ceres sets her left foot, for example, resembles a bearded face with deep-set eye and protuberant cheek, seen from the side. Other faces materialize from

32 On the term *poëterij*, introduced by Van Mander in "T'leven van Ioan de Mabuse, Schilder", *Schilder-Boeck*, fol. 225 verso, see Silver L., "Figure nude, historie, e poesie: Jan Gossaert and the Renaissance Nude in the Netherlands", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 37 (1986) 1–40; and Miedema (ed.), *Karel van Mander: The Lives*, trans. Cook-Radmore, III 146–147.

33 On the adage 'Sine Cere et Baccho friget Venus', see note 17 *supra*. Van Mander cites this adage in "Van Venus", in *Het Schilder-Boeck V: Wtlegghingh*, fol. 29 verso. On the *Eunuch* as a source of *boelscappen*—erotic imagery closely related to the *poëterij*—see Sluijter E.J., "Emulating Sensual Beauty: Representations of Danaë from Gossaert to Rembrandt", *Simiolus* (1999) 4–45, esp. 12, 14–16.

34 Mynors (ed. – trans.), *Adages II i 1 to II vi 100*, 886.

35 On the *cestus*, see Van Mander, "Van Venus", in "Wtlegghingh", fol. 29 recto.

the knotty bark of the myrtle tree, sacred to Venus, against which she leans—most conspicuously, a satyr-like face with upturned eyes in shadowy sockets, a blunt nose, a leering mouth, and a goatee. Above the doves, likewise sacred to Venus, another face appears to be forming, its eye-sockets already discernible, the nose just beginning to project, the cheeks and brow not yet distinguishable. These embryonic countenances allude to the transformative power of emergent love, as embodied by Venus in the company of her son Cupid and servitors Ceres and Bacchus. This is surely why the mask-like faces embedded in the tree trunk are juxtaposed to two further references to love-driven transformation: the Provençal roses growing next to the satyr's head allude to Adonis, beloved by Venus, from whose blood they first issued;³⁶ the paired doves below the less fully-formed face allude to the nymph Peristera, who, driven by affection for the goddess, helped her to gather a bouquet so floriferous that it bested the one Cupid had plucked.³⁷ For her pains, the petulant Cupid then turned her into a snow-white dove, a creature that ever after remained dear to the goddess.

Goltzius invites the viewer to read the facial images as metonymic analogues of prospering Venus: they are tendered as presages of love's newfound strength, its growing power to overturn the normal course of events. Karel van Mander's iconographical treatise, *Wtlegghingh op den Metamorphosis*, written soon after Goltzius drew his *penwerck*, provides ready access to the dense web of allusions he has spun. The proximity of the satyr's face to Venus's, its features as dark and bestial as hers are bright and beautiful, intimates that she is two-faced: on the one hand, Venus is the 'daughter of heaven', celestial in her pulchritude; on the other, to quote Van Mander, she is 'dubbed vulgar, carnal, and voluptuous, the youngest daughter of Jupiter and Dione, who prefers to haunt solitary and dark places, where her works may remain hidden'.³⁸

36 On Adonis, from whose blood issued the red rose and the Provençal rose, see *ibidem*, fol. 30 recto; and Van Mander, "Van Adonis", in *ibidem*, fol. 88 recto.

37 On Peristera, see Van Mander, "Van Venus", in "Wtlegghingh", fol. 30 recto.

38 Van Mander, "Van Venus", in "Wtlegghingh", fol. 30 recto: 'Maer Plato in't Bancket seght, datter zijn twee Venus, en twee Cupidons: want Venus is niet sonder Cupido. D'een Venus, seght hy, is ouder als d'ander, en is sonder Moeder, dochter des Hemels, die wy noemen Hemelsche, reyne en kuyssche, niet anders soeckende als een lichtende blinckentheyt in der Godtheyt: oft door een seer vyerige liefde die sy in ons baert, onse Sielen te vereenigen met t'Godlijcke wesen, als die t'beeldt en teecken des selven is. D'ander is de jongste dochter van Iuppiter en Dione, dese wort ghenoeemt volcksche, vleeschlijcke, wellustige, gemeenlijck haer onthoudende in eensaem hollen, en dockers plaetsen, om dat haer wercken verborgen willen wesen: dese noemt Pausanias te deser oorsaeck Melaena, dat is, de swarte'. As will be evident from this passage, there are also two aspects to Cupid. Indeed, it might be argued that all four deities are depicted in two aspects, the one celestial, the other terrestrial: the smoky face, turned left like Cupid's, portrays his baser nature; the face

This other Venus, as we have seen, is nicknamed Melaena, the 'dark one'. The *penwerck* shows the goddess inhabiting precisely the sort of shaded, isolated spot described by Van Mander; her pose, standing from the waist down, reclining from the waist up, not only indicates that she has not yet reached her full stature—namely, strength—but also implies that she, like the sweethearts she inspires, shares a predilection for the lover's couch or bed. However, as Goltzius intimates, when Venus finally stands upright, and her power blazes at maximum strength, she will tower over Ceres and Bacchus. That the implanted faces belong to satyrs has to do with their function as attributes of Venus's power to provoke sexual desire: as Van Mander puts it, they represent the 'pricking of Venus', her capacity to beget carnal love ('beteyckenende de prickleinge van Venus').³⁹ That the faces appear nascent rather than fully formed, speaks to their status as indicators of love's ability to transmogrify all things. Van Mander makes this point by paraphrasing Petrarch's "Triumph of Love" from the *Trionfi*: 'Petrarch the Italian poet gives Cupid rainbow-colored wings in his "Triumph of Love", in order to make known that unchaste love, once it is unbound, is insatiable, always tending toward transformation and renewal'.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the partially glimpsed likenesses, their features still inchoate, directly derive from Petrarch's description of the captives marching behind Love's triumphal chariot, as its living spoils:

With keen survey I mark'd the ghostly show,
To find a shade among the sons of Woe
To memory known: but every trace was lost
In the dim features of the moving host:
Oblivion's hand had drawn a dark disguise
O'er their wan lineaments and beamless eyes.⁴¹

projecting from the ledge, silhouetted like Ceres's, betrays her earthy side; and the young satyr whose face and figure repeat that of Bacchus, and who, like him, gazes adoringly at Venus, functions as his vulgar doppelgänger. On the potential fierceness of Cupid, inherited from the wild beasts that suckled him, see Van Mander, "Van Cupido", in *ibidem*, fol. 7 verso.

39 Van Mander, "Van den Satyren", in *ibidem*, fol. 11 verso: 'Sy zijn (meenen eenighe) ghe-noemt Satyren, nae een Griecx woordt Sathe, beteyckenende de prickleinge van Venus'.

40 Van Mander, "Van Cupido", in *ibidem*, fol. 8 recto-verso: 'Petrarcha Italisch Poeet, in zijn Triumph der Liefde, geeft hem vleughels van duysenderley verwen, willende te kennen geven, dat d'oncuysche Liefde, ongebonden wesende, onversadigh is, altijts gheneghen tot veranderinghe, oft vernieuwinghe'.

41 Boyd H.A.M. (ed. – trans.), *The Triumphs of Petrarch* (London: 1807) 6.

The presence of faces in fire, earth, and wood, suggests that love, in its impulse to transform, knows no elemental boundaries. As Van Mander states with reference to Empedocles, love is like 'fiery heat, or again, like a Godly force that causes all created things to germinate'.⁴² Caught in mid-formation, the dynamic countenances also call to mind Van Mander's assertion that love is a fundamentally mimetic impulse, for it compels all living things to fashion likenesses of themselves: 'Love, a Godly power, consists in a sure desire, found in all things, to bring forth one's image and likeness through union and coalescence'.⁴³ He reiterates this observation to underscore its importance: 'Venus [like Cupid] is construed truly as the desire of created things to bring forth their image and likeness'.⁴⁴ The likenesses of faces that coalesce from the drawing's dense networks of line, stand for this mimetic impulse that Venus, as the personification of love, sets in motion. Love's power is so great, suggests Goltzius, that it crosses even the boundaries separating one species from another, causing semi-human likenesses to emerge from the things of nature. Venus's presence gives rise to these feats of natural artifice because, as Van Mander further suggests, 'she presides over summer and the month of April, as goddess over orchards and gardens, wherein she is placed to foster propagation and growth'.⁴⁵

Goltzius's astonishing penmanship, the index of his love of art, proxies for and is proxied by these instances of anthropomorphosis. Indeed, in the magnificent *Venus, Bacchus, and Ceres* of 1606, the largest of his *penwercken*, he interpolates a self-portrait of himself offering burins at the altar of Venus: he thus implies that it is he, or rather, his penhand, that bodies forth the mimetic passion engendered by Venus [Fig. 6.5].⁴⁶ Van Mander formulates this conceit complementarily in the chapter on the woodland deity Pan. Referring to the iconography of Pan wrestling with Cupid, he argues that the latter's victory demonstrates love's power over nature, for it is love, and love alone, that

42 Ibidem, fol. 8 recto: '[...] oft een vyerige hitte, oft eyndlijck een Godtlijcke cracht, die aller schepselen wasdom gheeft, nae dat Empedocles seght'.

43 Ibidem: '[...] en dat Liefde een Godtlijcke cracht wesende, is een seker begheerte in alle dingen, om hem te vereenighen en versamen, om zijn ghelijck wesen oft ghedaente te tellen'.

44 Ibidem: '[...] welcke Venus oock wordt ghehouden eyghentlijck te wesen de begheerte, die de schepselen hebben, voort te brengen hun ghelijcke beeldt oft schepsel, welcke begheerte ontstaet uyt een wisse overeencominghe der lichaemen en ghematicheyte der Locht'.

45 Van Mander, "Van Venus", in ibidem, fol. 29 recto: 'Sy was ooc geheeten Somer oft April-Goddinne, en Godinne der Hoven oft Tuynen, daer sy in was gestelt om het teelen en wasdom'.

46 On Goltzius's self-portrait in the *Venus, Bacchus, and Ceres* of 1606, see Melion, "Love and Artisanry" 60–62; and Nichols L.W., "Sine Cerere et Libero friget Venus, 1606 (?)", in Leeftang – Luijten – et al., *Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617)* 277–279, no. 100.



FIGURE 6.5 *Hendrick Goltzius, Venus, Bacchus, and Ceres, 1606. Pen and brown ink, reddish-accent strokes, over traces of red chalk, on prepared canvas, 219 × 163 cm. STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG.*

awakens nature's generative capacities: 'Love conquers Nature: and it is Love that stirs Nature, generating her every form'.⁴⁷ In bringing the elements to life, anthropomorphizing them, Goltzius's Venus allegorizes the artist's ability to activate the power of representation that lies dormant in nature until it is pricked by love [Fig. 6.4]. At issue is his own artifice, his wondrous skill of hand, that the prodigies of nature on view in the *Venus, Bacchus, and Ceres* may be seen boldly to portend.

3 Anthropomorphosis and the Virgilian-Ovidian Trope of the Living Tree

How then does one explain the anthropomorphic tree prominently featured in Goltzius's large portrait engraving of Frederick de Vries, published in 1597 with an imperial privilege [Fig. 6.6]?⁴⁸ The print contains a dedication to the subject's father, the Venice-based painter Dierick de Vries, who had sent Frederick and his brother to Haarlem, placing them under the care of his good friend Goltzius. The boy established very close ties with his guardian, as the will drawn up before his premature death in 1613 testifies.⁴⁹ Goltzius, as Marijn Schapelhoutman has astutely observed, portrays Frederick in the parodic guise of a knight-falconer, with a peaceable dove in place of the rapacious falcon, and a Frisian water hound, the family dog, in place of the hunting horse.⁵⁰ Frederick prepares to mount his 'steed', whose leash he grasps as if it were a set of reins. The performative tableau perfectly aligns with Van Mander's account, in the *Wtbeeldinge der figueren*, of the various meanings that attach to the symbolic image of a dog: 'A leashed dog [also] signifies the knight, who remains

47 Van Mander, "Van Pan", in "Wtlegghingh", fol. 11 verso: 'Liefde verwint Natuere: Oock is Liefde, die de teelinge aller gedaenten der Natueren verweckt'.

48 On the *Portrait of Frederick de Vries*, see Schapelhoutman M., "Portrait of Frederik de Vries, 1597", in Leeftang – Luijten (eds.), *Hendrick Goltzius (1559–1617): Drawings, Prints, and Paintings* 163–164. Also see Reznicek, *Die Zeichnungen von Hendrick Goltzius* I 53, 481; Wetering E. van de, "Verdwenen tekeningen en het gebruik van afwisbare tekenplankjes en tafelletten", *Oud Holland* 105 (1991) 210–227, esp. 222; and Leesberg M. (comp.) – Leeftang H. (ed.), *The New Hollstein Dutch & Flemish Etchings, Engravings, and Woodcuts, 1450–1700: Hendrick Goltzius*, 4 vols. (Ouderkerk aan der IJssel – Amsterdam: 2012) II, no. 256.

49 For the text of Frederick's last will and testament, see Nichols L.W., "Hendrick Goltzius: Documents and Printed Literature Concerning his Life", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 42–43 (1991–1992) 106–107.

50 Schapelhoutman, "Portrait of Frederik de Vries", in Leeftang – Luijten (eds.), *Hendrick Goltzius* 163.



FIGURE 6.6 Hendrick Goltzius, Portrait of Frederick de Vries, 1597. Engraving, 358 × 263 mm.
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true to his liege lord and bound to his oath'.⁵¹ Here the liege lord is Goltzius who stands proxy for the boy's father Dierick, on whose behalf he wittily affirms that Frederick is a model foster son and vassal. The dedicatory text, inscribed on the cartouche below, alludes to the print's function of portraying an absent son, in token of mutual affection: 'Dedicated to the excellent painter Theodoric Frisius in Venice, by reason of friendship and for the purpose of portraying an absent son'.⁵² In sum, the *Portrait of Frederick de Vries* is meant to offer consolation, and, by supplying Dierick with a true likeness of his missing boy, Goltzius verifies that he is a genuine friend.

Additionally, the quatrain beneath the dedicatory plaque, composed by Petrus Scriverius, explains how it is that Goltzius purports to provide paternal consolation. He has endeavored not merely to portray Frederick, but more than this, to bring him to life: 'It may be that you fail to grasp what is comprised by this image. Behold its meaning in brief: simplicity seeks and loves fidelity. The faithful dog, the simple boy—the Phidian hand of Goltzius has aptly brought them to life in copper'.⁵³ The conceit distilled in this statement again accords with Van Mander's explanation of the dove and the dog. According to the *Wtbeeldinge*, the dove would signify the boy's loving simplicity: 'The dove draws Venus's chariot and stands for love, for doves appear to kiss one another. Some say that they also represent spiritual love. Further, they symbolize simplicity, for one reads, "Be simple as doves". And since their bodies contain no gall, they betoken mercy'.⁵⁴ With regard to the dog's connotations, Van Mander states that the animal 'signifies the steadfast teacher, who must bark ceaselessly and unrestrainedly, keep watch over men's souls, and punish their

51 Mander Karel van, "Van den Hondt, en zijn beteyckeninghe", in idem, *Het Schilder-Boeck VI: Wtbeeldinge der figueren, waer in te sien is, hoe d'heydenen hun Goden uytghebeeldt, en onderscheyden hebben* (Alkmaar, Jacob de Meester: 1604), fol. 128 verso: 'Eenen ghebonden Hondt beteyckent den Krijghs-man, die zijn Hooftman ghetrouw is, en aen zijnen Eedt is verbonden'.

52 'Theodorico Frisio Pictori egregio apud Venetos amicitiae, et filij absentis repraesentandi gratia. D.D.'

53 Quid tabula haec capiat, fors non capis: en tibi paucis.
Mentem. Simplicitas quaerit amatque fidem.
Fida canis, simplexque puer, quos Goltzius apto.
Vivere Phidiaca fecit in aere manu.

54 Van Mander, "De Duyve", in *Het Schilder-Boeck VI: Wtbeeldinge der figueren: waer in te sien is, hoe d'Heydenen hun Goden uytghebeeldt, en onderscheyden hebben*, fol. 131 verso: 'De Duyve, oock een van Venus Waghen-peerden, wort voor de liefde gehouden: want sy malcander schijnen kussen. Sommighe willender een gheestlijcke liefde mede beteyckenen. Sy wort oock ghenomen voor d'eenvuldicheyt, om datmen leest, eenvuldich als Duyven: en om datse sonder galle is, voor de goedertierenheyt'.

transgressions. The dog [also] denotes fidelity, since it is very loyal and forgets no act of kindness'.⁵⁵ The dog, upon whose back Frederick clammers, therefore designates his faithful teacher and virtual pater familias Goltzius, whom the dove-like Frederick, in his candor and sweet innocence, is seen to love and trust. Goltzius has placed his Phidian burin-hand at Dierick's disposal, bodying Frederick forth and causing him candidly to meet his father's gaze. Moreover, Goltzius, or rather, his canine proxy, likewise openly stares into his dedicatee's eyes, standing poised and ready to do his bidding.

Beside the boy's head a pair of faces projects from the twisting trunk of the adjacent tree, the motion of which enhances the lively presence of the emergent faces. The tree closely attaches to Frederick: it rotates away to the right, in contraposition to his swivelling motion leftward. The protruding bole alongside the brim of his hat takes the form of a grotesquely lidded eye; the matching eye submerges into the hatched shadows at right. The bulbous nose, its nostrils splayed, projects just below and abuts the upturned, curiously vertical mouth. Embedded in this face is a second face: the first face's nostrils constitute its eyes, the upper lip its nose ridge. The trope of the engraver's life-giving burin-hand that animates the copperplate, enlivening the boy, dove, and dog, stretches elastically to encompass this anthropomorphic effect that converts the tree into a composite being, at once arboreal and humanoid, and in this sense doubly alive. Goltzius underlines the analogy of tree to body by drawing parallels between Frederick and the tree behind him: his right foot is juxtaposed to one of its roots, his torso and left arm are continuous with the main trunk, his right arm and left leg extend like branches, and his face borders the faces in the bark.

The conceit of the anthropoid tree, as we shall see, is Ovidian. It connects to the notion that absent the presence of the beloved, the poet's song alone has the power to console the lovelorn heart. Ovid was ever a central concern of Goltzius, who produced two complete (and one partial) series of Ovidian illustrations, focusing respectively on Books I and II of the *Metamorphoses*, between 1589 and 1591.⁵⁶ The series, surely intended to be comprehensive, but ultimately abandoned, elaborates upon the woodcut images designed by Virgil Solis for Johann Spreng's *Metamorphoses Ovidii* of 1563, which consists

55 Ibid., fol. 128 verso: 'Den Hondt beteyckent den rechten Leeraer, die onbeschroemt moet ghestadich bassen, de wacht houden over s'Menschen sielen, en bestraffen de zonden der Menschen. Met den Hondt wort beteyckent de getrouwicheyt: want den Hondt seer ghetrouwe is, oock geen weldaet vergetende'.

56 On Goltzius's Ovidian project, see Sluijter E.J., "Herscheppingen in prenten van Hendrick Goltzius en zijn kring (1)", *Delineavit et Sculpsit* 4 (1990) 1–23; and idem, "Herscheppingen in prenten van Hendrick Goltzius en zijn kring (11)", *Delineavit et sculpsit* 5 (1991) 1–19.

of narrative excerpts from Ovid combined with allegories in elegiac verse by Spreng [Fig. 6.7].⁵⁷ The pictures, adapted from Bernard Salomon's woodcuts in Jean de Tournes's Dutch and French editions of the *Metamorphoses*, anchor the *enarrationes* and *allegoriae*, functioning as topical heads for the texts and facilitating access to them [Fig. 6.8]. Goltzius must also have known the copies of Solis's 178 woodcuts incorporated into Johannes Florianus's *Metamorphosis, dat is de Herscheppinge, beschreven door den vermaerden poeet Ovidius Naso* (Antwerp, Hans de Laet: 1566).⁵⁸ Amongst the subjects Goltzius selected for his second series is the story of the Heliades (*Metamorphoses* II 340–366) who, overwhelmed by grief at the death of their brother Phaeton, were transformed into poplars, their never-ceasing tears into the sap whence amber originates [Figs. 6.9 & 6.10].⁵⁹ In 1593, soon after he stopped working on his pictorial version of the *Metamorphoses*, Goltzius engraved *Pygmalion and the Ivory Statue*, one of the key episodes from Book X, exploring its potential as an allegory of art [Fig. 6.11].⁶⁰ The *Portrait of Frederick de Vries*, in its inclusion of a metamorphic

57 Sprengius M. Iohannis, *Metamorphoses Ovidii, argumentis quidem soluta oratione, Enarrationibus autem & Alegorijs Elegiaco versu accuratissime expositae, summaque diligentia ac studio illustratae, per M. Iohan. Sprengium Augustan. Una cum vivis singulorum transformationum Iconibus, a Vergilio Solis, eximio pictore, delineatis* (Frankfurt am Main, Apud Georgium Corvinum, Sigismundum Feyerabend, & haered. Wygandi Galli: 1563). The same woodcuts illustrate Johann Postius's Latin and German redaction of the *Metamorphoses*, likewise published in 1563; see Postius Iohannis Germershemius, *Iohan. Posthii Germershemii tetrasticha in Ovidii Metam. lib. XV. quibus accesserunt Vergilij Solis figurae elegantiss. & iam primum in lucem editae / Schoene Figuren auss dem fuertrefflichen Poeten Ovidio, allen Malern, Goldtschmidten, unnd Bildthauwern, zü Nutz unnd Gütem, mit Fleiss gerissen* (Frankfurt am Main, Johannes Posthius: 1563).

58 These copies after Solis first appeared in the second edition of 1566, on which see Sluijter, "Metamorphoses' in Print" 25.

59 On the *Heliades Transformed into Poplars, and Cygnus into a Swan*, see Leesberg (comp.) – Leeftang (ed.), *New Hollstein: Hendrick Goltzius* III, no. 555. On the Heliades, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. J.F. Miller, Loeb Classical Library 42–43, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA – London: 1984) II 82–85. On Salomon's woodcuts, which first appeared in Borluit Guillaume, *Excellent figuren ghesneden uuyten uppersten poete Ovidius [...]* (Lyon, Jan van Tournis: 1557), see Alpers S., *The Decoration of the Torre de la Parada*, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard 9 (London – New York: 1971) 93–98; and Sluijter E.J., "Metamorphoses' in Prints by Hendrick Goltzius and his Circle", in idem, *Seductress of Sight: Studies in Dutch Art of the Golden Age*, Studies in Netherlandish Art and Cultural History 2 (Zwolle: 2000) 23–25. De Tournes simultaneously published a French translation, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide figurée*.

60 On this print, see Melion W.S., "Vivae dixisses virginis ora: The Discourse of Color in Hendrick Goltzius's *Pygmalion and the Ivory Statue*", *Word & Image* (2000) 153–176.

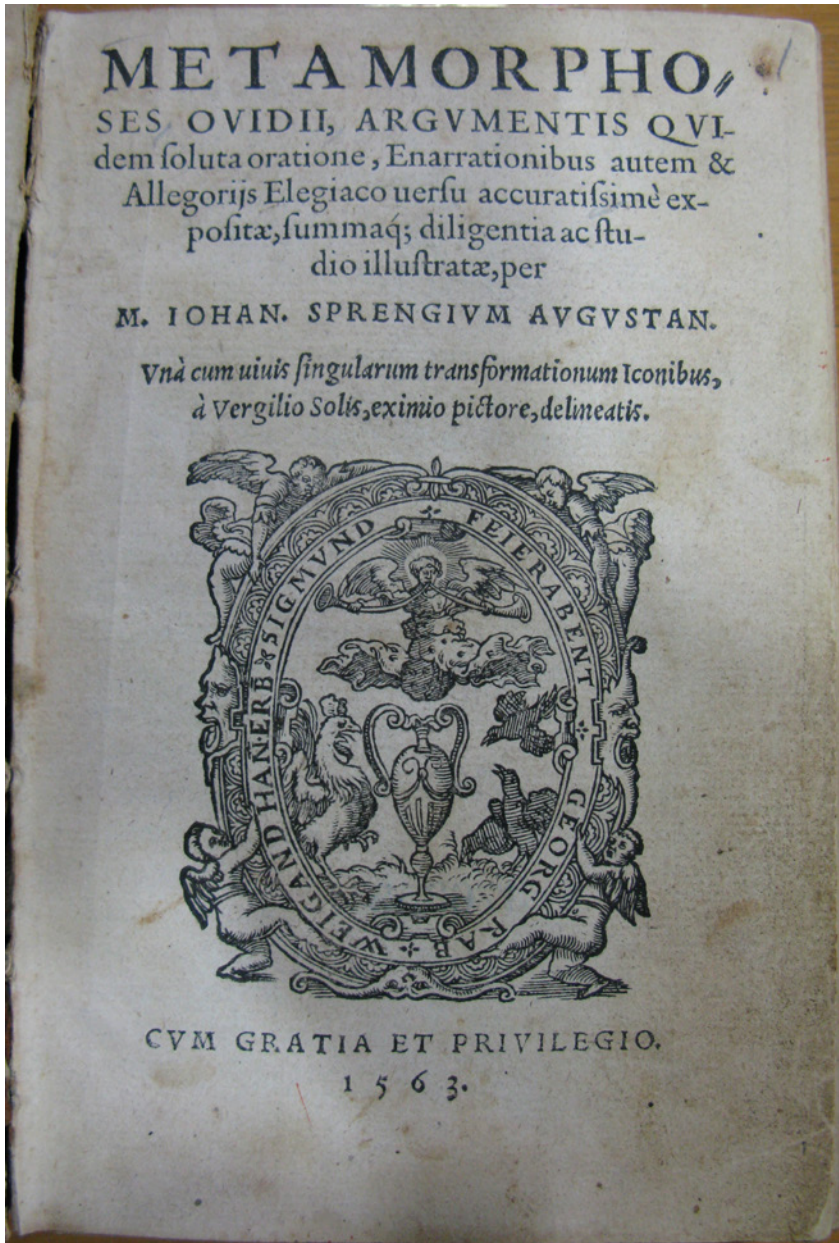


FIGURE 6.7 *Johann Spreng, Metamorphoses Ovidii, argumentis quidem soluta oratione, Enarrationibus autem & Alegorijs Elegiaco versu accuratissime expositae, summaque diligentia ac studio illustratae, per M. Iohan. Sprengium Augustan. Una cum vivis singularum transformationum Iconibus, a Vergilio Solis, eximio pictore, delineatis (Frankfurt am Main, Apud Georgium Corvinum, Sigismundum Feyerabent, & haered. Wygandi Galli: 1563), duodecimo.* THE NEWBERRY LIBRARY, CHICAGO.

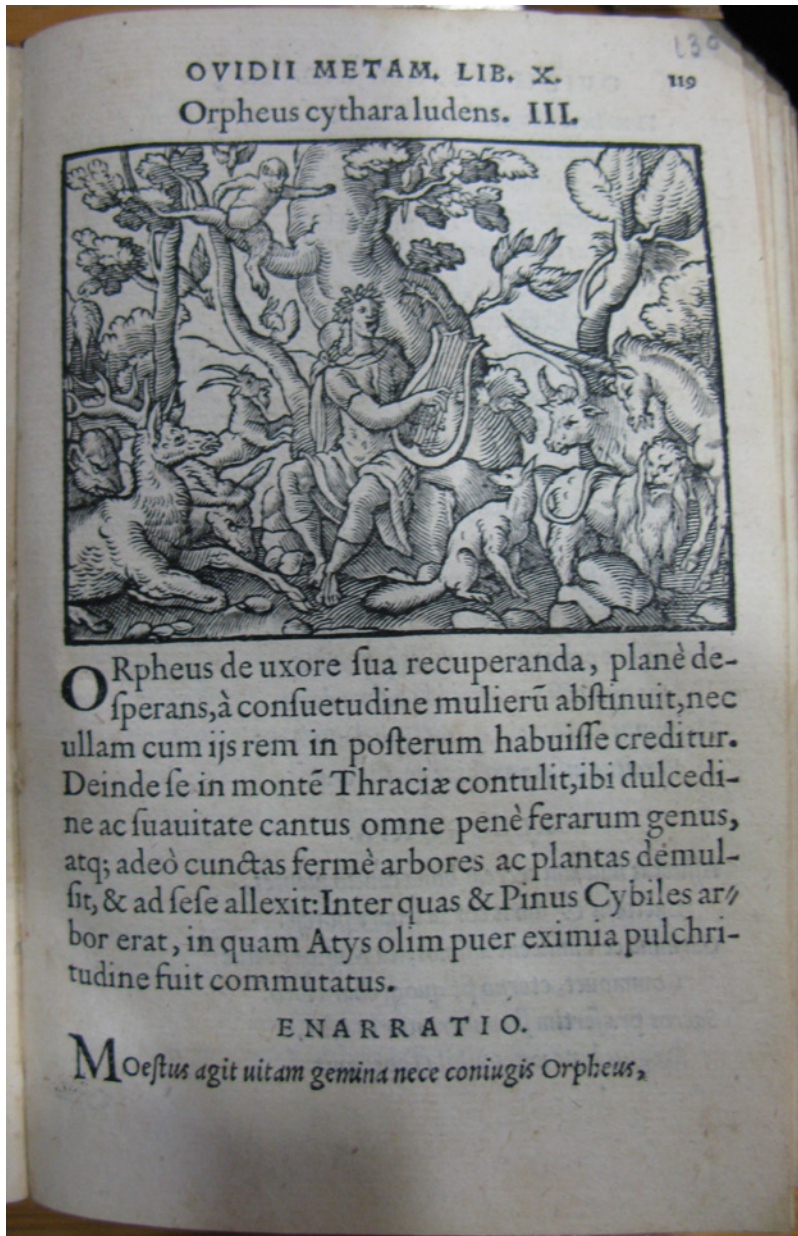


FIGURE 6.8 *Virgil Solis*, Orpheus Singing of his Lost Eurydice, in *Johann Spreng*, *Metamorphoses Ovidii*, argumentis quidem soluta oratione, Enarrationibus autem & Alegorijs Elegiaco versu accuratissime expositae, summaque diligentia ac studio illustratae (*Frankfurt am Main*, Apud Georgium Corvinum, Sigismundum Feyerabent, & haered. Wygandi Galli: 1563), duodecimo.

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FIGURE 6.9 Anonymous engraver after Hendrick Goltzius, *Heliades Transformed into Poplars, and Cygnus into a Swan*, 1590. Engraving, 175 × 220 mm.
THE BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON.

tree, likewise mines Ovid's tenth book, this time taking over its imagery of living trees [Fig. 6.6].

Book x is largely devoted to the vegetal and arboreal transformations of its human protagonists, amongst whom are Cyparissus, turned by Apollo into the cypress (*Metamorphoses* x 106–142), and Myrrha, who became the myrrh tree (*Metamorphoses* x 298–518) [Figs. 6.12 & 6.13].⁶¹ More importantly, it begins with the story of Orpheus and Eurydice: their ill-fated nuptials, her untimely death, his descent into Hades to retrieve her, and their second separation, more irrevocable than the first [Fig. 6.8]. After this grievous loss, he returns to Thrace, climbs a grassy but treeless hill, and begins once again mournfully to sing and to play the lyre. So powerful is his song that it brings inanimate stones to life and, even more wondrously, confers human characteristics on live trees. There follows the famous catalogue of living trees, whom Ovid describes as rushing from all sides to join Orpheus; they transform the formerly bare hilltop into a

61 On Cyparissus, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Miller, 70–75; on Myrrha, 84–101.

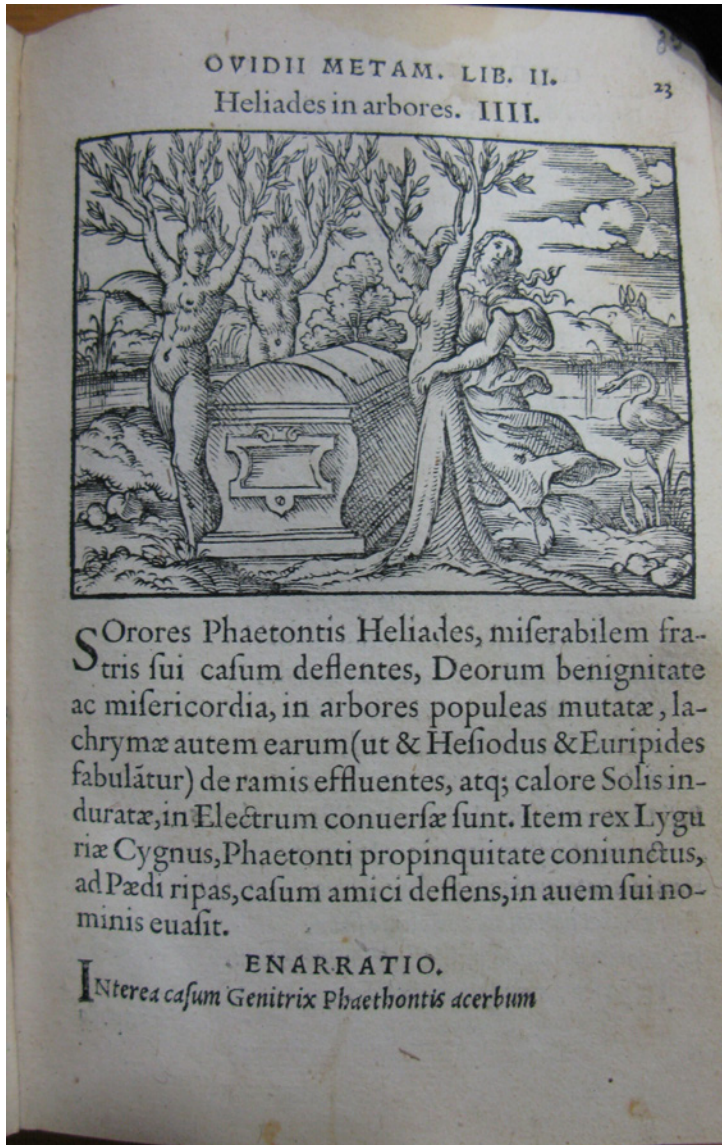


FIGURE 6.10 *Virgil Solis, The Heliades Transformed into Poplars at the Tomb of Phaeton, in Johann Spreng, Metamorphoses Ovidii, argumentis quidem soluta oratione, Enarrationibus autem & Alegorijs Elegiaco versu accuratissime expositae, summaque diligentia ac studio illustratae, per M. Iohan. Sprengium Augustan. Una cum vivis singularum transformationum Iconibus, a Vergilio Solis, eximio pictore, delineatis (Frankfurt am Main, Apud Georgium Corvinum, Sigismundum Feyerabend, & haered. Wygandi Galli: 1563), duodecimo.*
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FIGURE 6.11 Hendrick Goltzius, Pygmalion and the Ivory Statue, 1593. Engraving, 325 × 216 mm.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON.

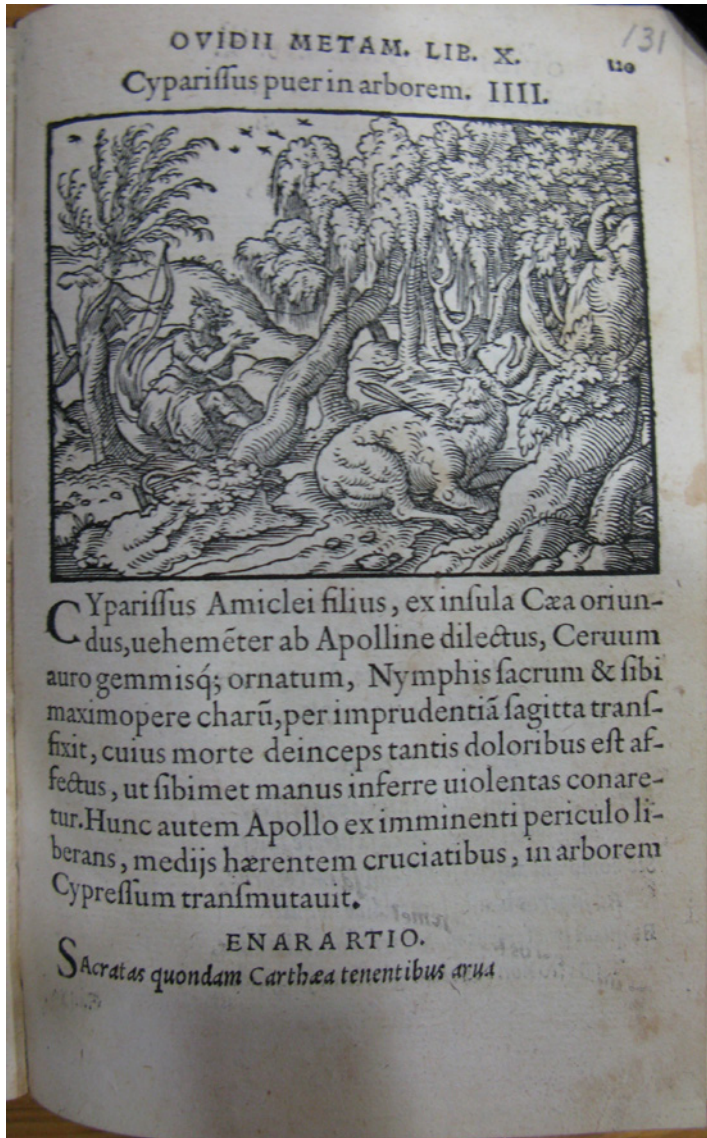


FIGURE 6.12 *Virgil Solis, Cyparissus Transformed into a Cypress, in Johann Spreng, Metamorphoses Ovidii, argumentis quidem soluta oratione, Enarrationibus autem & Alegorijs Elegiaco versu accuratissime expositae, summaque diligentia ac studio illustratae, per M. Iohan. Sprengium Augustan. Una cum vivis singularum transformationum Iconibus, a Vergilio Solis, eximio pictore, delineatis (Frankfurt am Main, Apud Georgium Corvinum, Sigismundum Feyerabend, & haered. Wygandi Galli: 1563), duodecimo.*
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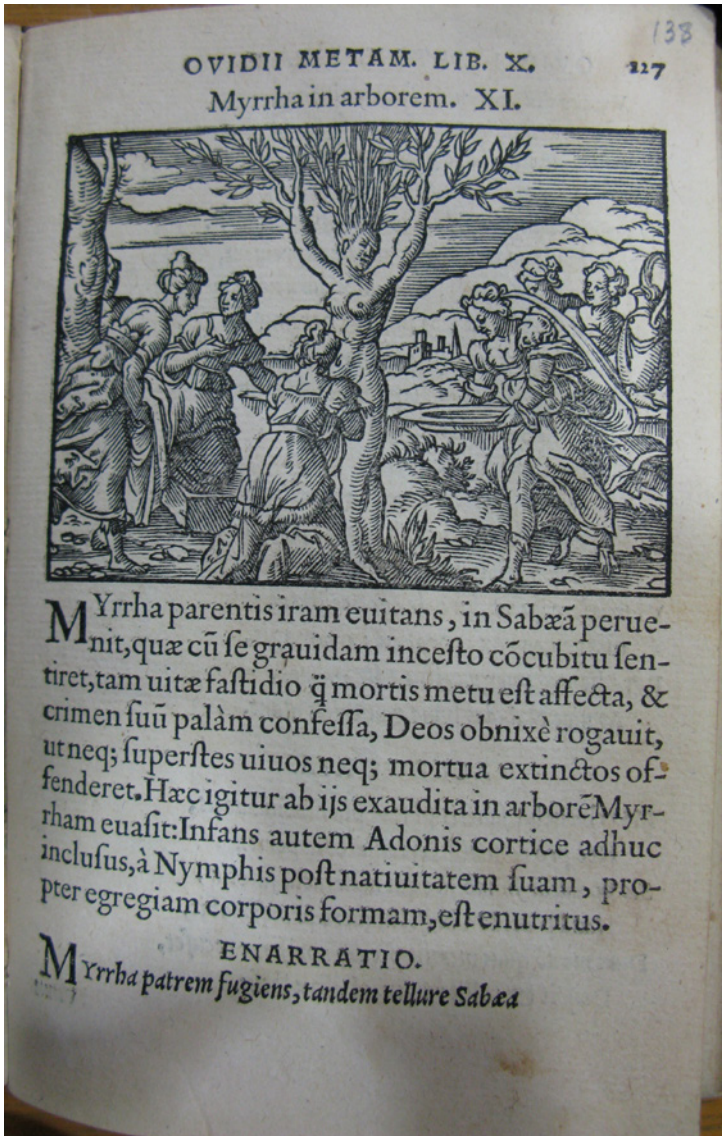


FIGURE 6.13 *Virgil Solis, Myrrha Transformed into a Myrrh Tree Gives Birth to Adonis, in Johann Spreng, Metamorphoses Ovidii, argumentis quidem soluta oratione, Enarrationibus autem & Alegorijs Elegiaco versu accuratissime expositae, summaque diligentia ac studio illustratae, per M. Iohan. Sprengium Augustan. Una cum vivis singularum transformationum Iconibus, a Vergilio Solis, eximio pictore, delineatis (Frankfurt am Main, Apud Georgium Corvinum, Sigismundum Feyerabent, & haered. Wygandi Galli: 1563), duodecimo.*

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verdant grove, a thickly planted forest, and, entranced by his plangent melody, they grant him the welcome gift of shade. Many of the trees, themselves relics of earlier transformations—the Heliadic poplars, for instance, or the Attian pine—are now re-anthropomorphized by the power of the poet's lays:

A hill there was, and on the hill a wide-extending plain, green with luxuriant grass; but the place was devoid of shade. When here the heaven-descended bard sat down and smote his sounding lyre, shade came to the place. There came the Chaonian oak, the grove of the Heliades, the oak with its deep foliage, the soft linden, the beech, the virgin laurel-tree, the brittle hazel, the ash, suitable for spear-shafts, the smooth silver-fir, the ilex-tree bending with acorns, the pleasant plane, the many-colored maple, river-haunting willows, the aquatic lotus-tree, the evergreen boxwood, the slender tamarisk, the double-hued myrtle, the viburnum with its dark-blue berries [...] and the elm-trees, draped with vines; the mountain-ash, the forest-pines, the arbutus-tree, loaded with ruddy fruit, the pliant palm, the prize of victory, the bare-trunked pine with broad, leafy top, pleasing to the mother of the gods, since Attis, dear to Cybele, exchanged for this his human form and stiffened in its trunk. Amidst this throng came the cone-shaped cypress, now a tree, but once a boy, beloved by that god who strings the lyre and strings the bow.⁶²

This 'grove the bard had drawn' not only accompanies Orpheus but inspires him to sing the stories of arboreal transformation ultimately comprised by Book x of the *Metamorphoses*.⁶³ In effect, Orpheus ventriloquizes Ovid, singing his tenth book into existence. He engages in this act of reflexive poësis to assuage melancholy, for he hopes thereby to relieve his crushing sense of loss, as Ovid explains in *Tristia* iv, itself written during the poet's residence in Pontus (near to Orphic Thrace), as an antidote to the torments of exile from Rome:

Whatever faults you may find—and you will find them—in my books, hold them absolved, reader, because of the time of their writing. I am an exile; solace, not fame, has been my object—that my mind dwells not constantly on its own woes. [...] While Orpheus was drawing to him the forest and the hard rocks by his singing, he was sorrowing for the wife twice lost to him. [...] Perchance this passion [for poetry] may seem madness, but this madness has a certain profit: it forbids the mind to be ever gazing at its woes, rendering it forgetful of present mischance. [...] it

62 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* x 86–108, in *ibid.* 70–73.

63 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* x 143, in *ibid.* 74–75: 'Tale nemus vates attraxerat [...]':

realizes neither exile nor the shores of the Scythian sea nor the anger of the gods, and just as if I were drinking slumber-bringing Lethe's draughts, I lose the sense of evil days.⁶⁴

Crucially, Orpheus's song begins with an invocation to his mother Calliope and to Jove, in which the poet states his intention of singing about beautiful boys whose beauty instills love in all who behold them, even the gods: 'But now I need the gentler touch, for I would sing of boys beloved by gods'.⁶⁵ The first such boy is Ganymede, whom Jove divinized, the second, Cyparissus, who became the Apollonian cypress.⁶⁶ In some vernacular editions of the *Metamorphoses*, such as Lodovico Dolce's *Le trasformationi* of 1565, the reference to boys is embroidered to accentuate both their beauty and virtue [Fig. 6.14]:

Now with sweet and subtle sound
I wish to sing of boys who were loved
As most noble and tender objects
By the holy Gods of the eternal choir.⁶⁷

The general resemblance between the *Portrait of Frederick de Vries* and Virgil Solis's *Orpheus Singing of his Lost Eurydice* (both prints feature a central figure shaded by an animate tree and surrounded by animals) along with the thematic similarities (both Goltzius's print and Orpheus's song focus on an innocent, beautiful, and beloved boy, and both the print and the song exist to console, to make good the grief of separation) suggests that the conspicuous presence of the living tree, faces emerging from its trunk, harkens back to *Metamorphoses* x 86–108, the story of Orpheus whose life-giving song tames beasts and confers on trees the semblance of human life [Figs. 6.6 & 6.8].⁶⁸ Frederick's dog and dove recall these compliant creatures, just as the tree, by evoking the power

64 Ovid, *Tristia* IV 1–20, 37–48, in Ovid, *Tristia. Ex Ponto*, trans. A.L. Wheeler, Loeb Classical Library 151 (Cambridge, MA – London: 1996) 158–161.

65 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* x 152–153, in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Miller, 74–75.

66 On Ganymede, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses* x 155–161, in *ibid.*; on Cyparissus, x 106–142, in *ibid.* 70–75.

67 Dolce Ludovico, *Le trasformationi* (Venice, Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari e Fratelli: 1555) 212:
Hora con suon piu dolce e piu sottile.
Vo cantare i fanciul, ch'amati foro,
Come obietto piu nobile e gentile,
Da i santi Dei del sempiterno coro.

68 Also see the copy after Solis's print in Ovid, *Metamorphosis, dat is de Herscheppinge, beschreven door den vermaerden poëet Ovidius Naso*, trans. Johannes Florianus (Antwerp, Hans de Laet: 1566) 254.



FIGURE 6.14 *Ludovico Dolce, Le trasformazioni* (Venice, Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari e Fratelli: 1555), quattordicesimo.

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of Orphic song, implicitly proclaims the consolatory and life-enhancing effect of Goltzius's Orphic print on the boy's absent father Dierick. Ovid himself makes the connection between the song of Orpheus and the thematic of paternity, in *Tristia* IV, section five, "To a Loyal Friend", where separation from his family leads him to wish upon his absent friends the blessing of a close-knit son: 'So may thy youthful son be like thee and may his character cause all to know him as thine own'.⁶⁹ The setting, a hill high above a distant valley, mountains, and lake or harbor, conjures up the hill where Orpheus went to sing. It may also allude to the panoramic imagery that signifies separation in *Tristia* IV, section seven, "A Reproach". Ovid imagines the great distance between himself and Rome and asks whether this is why another, less loyal friend's letters have not arrived: 'Countless mountains lie between thee and me, and roads, and rivers, and plains, and not a few seas. A thousand reasons can exist why the letters often sent by thee rarely reach my hands'.⁷⁰ By contrast, of course, the *Portrait of Frederick de Vries* has been designed to reach the father separated by a great distance from his son. The iris, also known as *gladiolus* ('sword lily') at lower right, because of its age-old association with the sword that pierced Mary's heart upon her separation from Jesus, likely adverts to the father's sorrowful separation from his son.⁷¹

In fact, the Orphic compliment paid by Goltzius is twofold, since it applies both to himself and to his charge Frederick. We might put this as follows: that Frederick resembles Solis's Orpheus, ostensibly pacifying animals and bringing trees to life, signifies the power of his presence to appease and quicken a loving father's heart; on the other hand, it is surely Phidian Goltzius who bears responsibility, as Scriverius claims, for this image's positive and inspiring effects. The larger analogy that subtends the comparison between Goltzius and Orpheus, is the Horatian one between poet and painter, or, better, poet and engraver. Van Mander draws this parallel in his *Schilder-Boeck* (*Book on Picturing*) of 1604. The terms he uses to describe Goltzius in the "Life of Goltzius" from Book IV, *Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and High German Picturers*, resurface in his account of Orpheus from Book V, *Commentary on the Metamorphoses of Publius Ovidius Nasonis*. Just as Goltzius is inordinately 'vast en veerdigh' ('sure and skilful') in the production of human figures, so

69 Ovid, *Tristia* IV 31–32, in Ovid, *Tristia. Ex Ponto*, trans. Wheeler, 184–185.

70 Ovid, *Tristia* IV 21–22, in *ibid.* 190–191.

71 On the iris as Marian symbol, see Kandeler R. – Ullrich W.R., "Symbolism of Plants: Examples from European-Mediterranean Culture Presented with Biology and History of Art", *Journal of Experimental Botany* (2009), doi: [jxb.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2009/02/26/jxb/erp042](https://doi.org/10.1093/jxb/erp042).

Orpheus was 'seer veerdigh en bequaem' ('very skilful and expert') in the production of eloquent speech.⁷² Inventive by nature, Goltzius is 'predisposed to rely upon his powers of invention' ('gheneghen yet te doen uyt zijn eygen vindinge'); exceptionally wise and intelligent ('uytnemende, wijsen, verstandighen'), Orpheus was the author of 'many subtle and useful inventions' ('veel spitsighe en nutte vonden').⁷³ Goltzius is Orphic as well in the way he embeds, rather than obtrudes, the device of the anthropoid tree, for Orpheus typically relied upon 'artful concealment' ('constighe deckselen') to make his art seem 'less ordinary and more wonderful to ordinary folk' ('niet soo ghemeen onder t'volck te brengen, dan verwonderlijkck to maken').⁷⁴

Van Mander implicitly compares poetry and engraving in his poem "Some Epigrams or Aphorisms of Virgilius Maro", which paraphrases the closing verses of *Georgic* IV, Virgil's retelling of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice and its aftermath. He inserted the poem as a coda to the *Eclogues and Georgics, that is, Ox-Pen and Field Work* of 1597, his translation of the *Eclogues and Georgics*.⁷⁵ Published by Zacharias Heyns, the book was richly illustrated with woodcut designs by none other than Goltzius.⁷⁶ Van Mander wittily elaborates upon the artisanal trope of poetry: with reference to Orpheus's lyre, he construes prosody as a manual art, 'vingers const' ('art plied by the fingers'), and he touts its civilizing effects that take 'someone rough and graceless' ('rouw' onaerdich wesen') and 'polish' him until he becomes 'even and smooth' ('dan sleep effen glat by desen').⁷⁷ The simile has purchase on Goltzius, for it brings to

72 Respectively, Van Mander, "T'leven van Henricus Goltzius", in *Het Schilder-Boeck IV*, fol. 285 verso; and idem, "Het thiende Boeck: Van Orpheus", in *Het Schilder-Boeck V*, fol. 84 recto.

73 Respectively, Van Mander, "T'leven van Henricus Goltzius", in *Het Schilder-Boeck IV*, fol. 282 recto; and idem, "Het thiende Boeck", in *Het Schilder-Boeck V*, fols. 84 recto & 83 verso.

74 Ibid., fol. 83 verso.

75 Virgilius Publius Maro, *Bucolica en Georgica, dat is, Ossen-stal en Landt-werck P. Virgilio Maronis, prince der poëten*, trans. Karel van Mander (Amsterdam, Zacharias Heyns: 1597). On this book and Van Mander's poetics, see Jacobsen R., *Carel van Mander (1548–1606) dichter en prozaschrijver*, Ph.D. dissertation, Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, 1906 (Utrecht: 1972) 69–105. 'Ossen-stal' translates 'Ox-Pen' or 'Oxen-stall', 'Landt-werck' 'Country Labor'.

76 On Goltzius's illustrations to Van Mander's *Eclogues and Georgics*, see Bialler N., *Chiaroscuro Woodcuts: Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617) and his Time* [exh. cat., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; The Cleveland Museum of Art] (Amsterdam – Ghent: 1992) 156–172; and Ackley C., "Goltzius's Chiaroscuro Woodcuts", *Print Quarterly* 12 (1995) 80–83, esp. 82.

77 Van Mander, "Eenighe Epigrammen oft opschriften Virgilij Maronis", in Virgil, *Bucolica en Georgica, dat is, Ossen-stal en Landt-werck*, trans. Van Mander, 176:

Voormaels men seyt den Thracy Harper goet.

mind the burnishing of the copperplate, and is also evocative of his distinctive *handelingh* ('manner of hand'), comprised by concentric networks of graduated hatches that secure an effect of smoothly continuous surface modulation.⁷⁸ Van Mander's Virgilian poem, since it covers much of the same ground as Ovid's Book x, testifies to the intense interest in Orpheus shared by members of Goltzius's circle:

Formerly was it said that the gifted Thracian harper,
 With his artful fingers moved the beasts,
 Caused rivers to change course, and through his sweet song
 Did make the lifeless rocks bound toward him.
 Moreover, it is said that many a tree
 Following after the abundance of sweet sound,
 Drew near to cast cool shade upon the singer.
 But this in my opinion is what he truly achieved:
 He mollified the cruelty of mortal men
 Through the great power of his eloquence.
 Yes indeed, with his cultivated voice he did manage
 Sweetly to tame and temper their fell lives.
 And brought them peaceably to live united
 Under laws good, civil, and well wrought:
 Orpheus, then, polished even and smooth
 These wild and boorish, rough and graceless people.

Met vingers const beweegde s'diers gemoet,
 Den vlieten snel hy schild', en door soet singen.
 Den clippen doof nae hem op deed' hy springhen.
 Daer toe men seyt dat boomen self al veel.
 Naevolghend' oock sijn soet gheluydsche Veel,
 Een schaduw' koel den sangher quamen leenen.
 Maer dit deed' hy, dit is het rechte meenen,
 Het sterfsche volcx strafmoedicheyt versacht.
 Heeft hy door sijn wel-sprekens groote macht:
 Iae conde soet met wel-gheleerder stemmen.
 Hun leven woest in maticheyt betemmen.
 Met wetten goet en borgherlijck bequaem,
 Hy woonen hun in vrede dede t'saem:
 Orpheus dan sleep effen glat by desen,
 Wilt boerich volck van rouw' onaerdich wesen.

78 On Goltzius's distinctive *handelingh*, see Melion W.S., "Hendrick Goltzius's Project of Reproductive Engraving," *Art History* 13 (1990) 458–487.

Van Mander, like Goltzius and Scriverius, was undoubtedly responding to the way the Orpheus episode had been read in such poetic compilations as Faustus Sabaeus Brixianus's *Picta poësis Ovidiana* of 1580. Sabaeus, in his short poetic gloss on *Metamorphoses* x 86–108, compares Orpheus to Amphion, who built the walls of Thebes solely through the power of his song [Fig. 6.15 & 6.16]. Both poets are analogized to master artisans, who compel materials to do their bidding, treating them like workshop apprentices:

You stones made complaisant by rebounding sounds,
Did you come to possess skilled hands, acutely listening ears?
When good Amphion and Orpheus constrained you with their plectra:
Did you feel how powerful was the song of both?⁷⁹

Sabaeus also invokes the artisanal trope of polishing. He quotes the “Allegoria Orphei” of Palladius (falsely ascribing it to Virgil), in which Orpheus’s ability to move trees and stones, stands for his soothing influence over hearts, whose wild turbulence he assuages in the same way that he polishes away savagery (‘moresque agrestes expolivit Orpheus’).⁸⁰

This brings me to the sweet expression of Goltzius’s Frederick, whose gentle smile is made all the more apparent by its juxtaposition to the rough-hewn faces emerging from the boled tree-trunk [Fig. 6.6]. In point of fact, as Sabaeus indicates, the paired faces are complementary: the power of anthropomorphism bespeaks the soothing efficacy of Orphic song, as if to say that the monstrous and disconcerting arboreal faces can be seen here to resolve into the gracious and charming face of Frederick. In his allegorical poem on *Metamorphoses* x, “Orpheus Playing the Cythara”, for example, Johann Spreng explicitly interprets Orpheus’s power over trees as an allusion to his power to restore despondent minds and raise up hearts weighed down by affliction:

79 Sabaeus Faustus Brixianus et al., *Picta poësis Ovidiana. Thesaurus propemodum omnium fabularum poëticarum, Fausti Sabaei Brixiani, aliorumque clarorum virorum [...] tam Veterum, quam Recentium, Epigrammatis espositarum*, ed. Nikolaus Reusner (Frankfurt, I. Spies, impensis S. Feyerabendij: 1580), fol. 114 verso:

Artificesne manus, auresne habuistis acutas:
Saxa repercussis obsequiosa sonis?
Quum bonus Amphion premeret vos pectine, & Orpheus:
Sensistis, quantum carmine uterque valet.

80 Ibid., fol. 115 recto:

‘Suavisonosque modos testudinis arbores secutae.
Umbram feruntur praebuisse vati.
Sed placidis hominum dictis fera corda mitigavit:
Doctaque vitam voce temperavit.’



FIGURE 6.15 *Sabaeus Faustus Brixianus et al.*, *Picta poësis Ovidiana*. Thesaurus propemodum omnium fabularum poëticarum, Fausti Sabaei Brixiani, aliorumque clarorum virorum [...] tam Veterum, quam Recentium, Epigrammatis espositarum, ed. Nikolaus Reusner (Frankfurt, I. Spies, impensis S. Feyerabendij: 1580), octavo.
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FIGURE 6.16 *Virgil Solis, Orpheus Singing of his Lost Eurydice, in Sabaeus Faustus Brixianus et al., Picta poësis Ovidiana. Thesaurus propemodum omnium fabularum poëticarum, Fausti Sabaei Brixiani, aliorumque clarorum virorum [...] tam Veterum, quam Recentium, Epigrammatis espositarum, ed. Nikolaus Reusner (Frankfurt, I. Spies, impensis S. Feyerabendij: 1580), octavo.*

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The good song renews minds utterly struck down,
 It can lift hearts hardened by care.
 Just as songs sooth the spirit, so music stirs the heart,
 Endearing it to eternal God.⁸¹

Van Mander similarly praises Orpheus for his capacity to 'help crestfallen, care-worn, and wavering spirits rise once again into their formerly peaceful, tranquil, and joyful condition, stilling the tumult and turmoil of their senses and understanding'.⁸² So too, Orpheus teaches that even the better emotions must be held in check, lest they overwhelm us: 'For it is a given that the motions of the spirit must be tempered and assuaged. In such things, to be either too fervid or too placid, causes men to slide backward: for even licit and noble emotions, if given free rein, can overwhelm the human spirit with care; and he who gives room to desire and passion, harboring them, can fall prey to anxiety and destruction'.⁸³ Van Mander correlates, indeed equates, Orpheus's power to animate trees, with this other power that moderates the passions, ensuring their curtailment: 'As for the trees that came near and followed him, one interprets them as signifying those in whom faulty feelings are deeply rooted'.⁸⁴ Orpheus uproots them, makes them change course, amends their 'valsche meningen'. In like manner, Goltzius, by inserting an Orphic tree into his portrait of Frederick and showing him as a candid, amiable, and peaceable boy, bolsters his claim upon the emotions of a grieving father, his promise of stirring and allaying

81 Spreng, "Orpheus cythara ludens", in *Metamorphoses Ovidii*, fol. 130 verso:

Afflictas multum recreat bona cantio mentes,
 Luctibus & duris corda levare potest.
 Carmina ceu mulcent animos, ita Musica pectus.
 Commovet, aeterno fit quoque chara Deo.

82 Van Mander, "Het thiende Boeck", in *Het Schilder-Boeck V*, fol. 84 verso: 'Hy was soo heel constigh, en wel ter tonge, dat hy der Menschen neder ghevallen benouwde, en wanhopighe ghemoeden weder op hielp, en dede stijghen in den voorighen, vredighen, gerusten, en vroylijcken staet, hebbende ghestilt de beroerten, en verstueringhen van hun sinnen, en verstandt'.

83 Ibid., fols. 84 verso-85 recto: '[...] ghemerckt s'gheests beroeringhen door reden versacht, en ghestilt worden. Hier in te ijverigh, oft ooc te slap te wesen, doet den Mensch achterwaert oft te rugge wijcken: want oock met toegelaten oft eerlijcke begeerten al te seer te wijcken, can s'Menschen geest met groote becommeringen overvallen worden: en die hun begeerten en lusten inruymen, oft plaetse geven, comen te vallen in swaer benouwtheden, en verderfnissen'.

84 Ibid., fol. 84 verso: '[...] by de Boomen, die tot hem quamen oft volghden, verstaetmen, die diep ghewortelt zijn in hun valsche meeninghen'.

the paternal heart. He purveys the image of a boy consoled and at the same time consoling.

Underlying the print's elegiac yet consolatory Ovidian imagery is the pastoral mode of Virgil's *Eclogues*, with its interwoven themes of loss and love, diaspora and homeland. The setting—a tree-topped hill opening onto further wooded hills and mountains at left and seaside cliffs at right—recalls the distinctive landscape of Arcadia, as rendered by Virgil, who diverged from Theocritus in situating his poems not in Sicily but in the bosky hills and riverside groves of an imagined Peloponnese.⁸⁵ Trees and, more to the point, living anthropomorphized trees are the co-protagonists of *Eclogues* 1, 2, 4, and 6, wherein they prove deeply responsive to the potent songs that bring them to life, variously sung by shepherds, herdsmen, and divinities.⁸⁶

Animated by these songs, they ultimately bear witness to the power of pastoral verse to enliven or, better, humanize nature: thus transformed, the trees themselves become songsters in the likeness of the poem's rustic poets and of the poet Virgil for whom these fictional (and, in the case of Gallus, actual) poets stand proxy.

Goltzius would have become intimately familiar with the Virgilian trope of the living tree, through Van Mander's Dutch translation of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* [Fig. 6.17].⁸⁷ Goltzius collaborated on this project as the likely designer of the fourteen woodcuts that respectively preface the ten *Eclogues* and four *Georgics*. The large tree growing from a hilltop in the *Portrait of Frederick de Vries* closely resembles the tree that towers over the two shepherds in the illustration to *Eclogue* 1 [Fig. 6.18].⁸⁸ The standing shepherd's pose—left arm lowered, right arm raised, left leg lifted over the right—is reminiscent of Frederick's, and here, too, a bird and dog appear; this dog, like the boy's water hound, looks out of the image at the viewer. The illustrations to *Eclogues* 2 and 3 likewise feature a tree similar to the one that shades Frederick [Figs. 6.19 & 6.20]. In the *Portrait*, the view at left to a tower nestled amongst trees at the base of wooded hills and mountains resembles the views to a hillside tower

85 On Theocritan pastoral and Virgil's divergence from this paradigm, see Rosenmeyer T.G., *The Green Cabinet: Theocritus and the European Pastoral Lyric* (Berkeley – Los Angeles: 1969), esp. 59–62, 120–123, 157–158, 171–172, 213–215, 265–266, 273–274; and Alpers P., *The Singer of the Eclogues: A Study of Virgilian Pastoral* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: 1979), esp. 72–73, 113–114, 116–124, 192–193, 204–209, 212–240.

86 On the metapoetic symbolism of trees in Virgil's *Eclogues*, see Henkel J.H., *Writing Poems on Trees: Genre and Metapoetics in Virgil's Eclogues and Georgics* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2009) 133–161.

87 See note 75 supra.

88 On the woodcut illustrating *Eclogue* 1, see Bialler, *Chiaroscuro Woodcuts* 159.



FIGURE 6.17 *Virgil, Bucolica en Georgica, dat is, Ossen-stal en Landt-werck, trans. Karel van Mander (Amsterdam, Zacharias Heyns: 1597).*
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FIGURE 6.18 Hendrick Goltzius, Tityrus and Meliboeus, illustration to Eclogue 1, in *Virgil, Bucolica en Georgica, dat is, Ossen-stal en Landt-werck*, trans. Karel van Mander (Amsterdam, Zacharias Heyns: 1597). Woodcut, 89 × 69 mm. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LEIDEN.

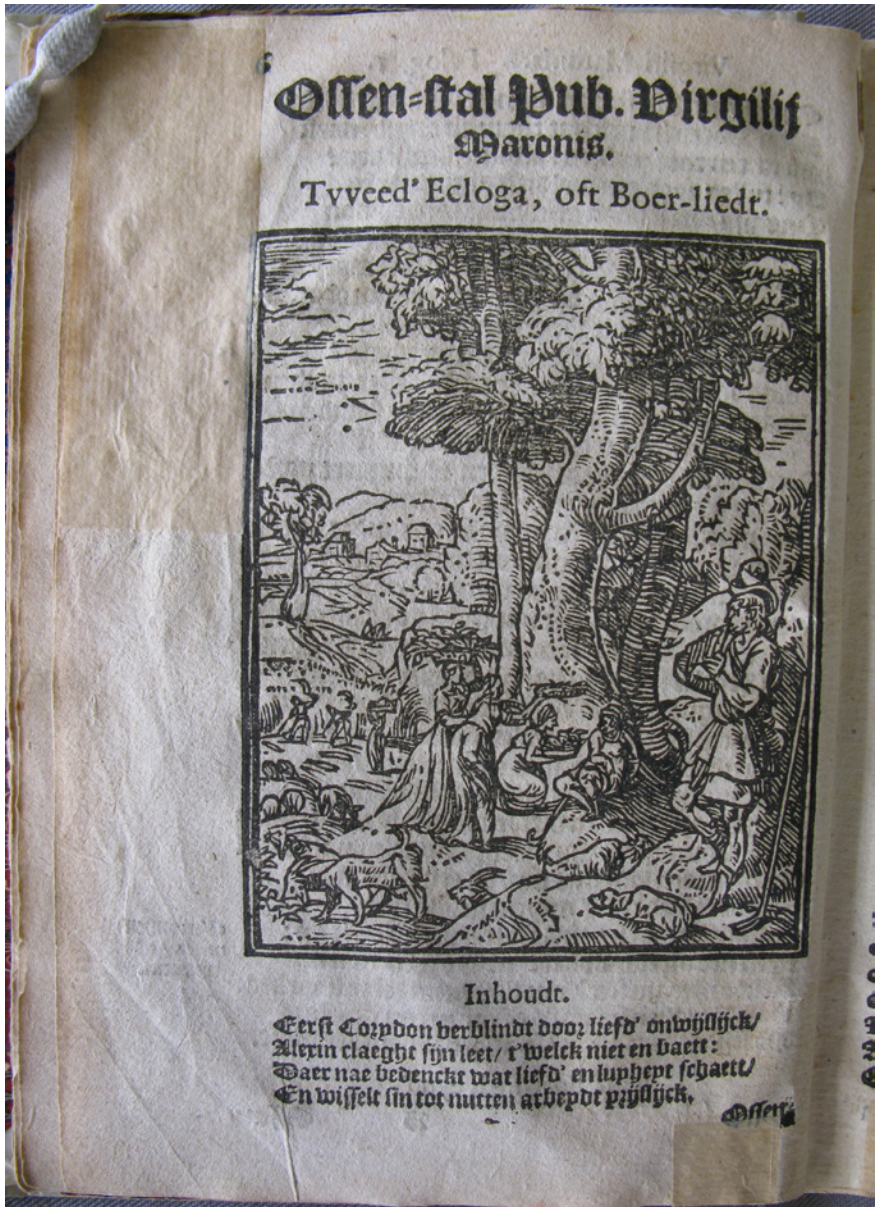


FIGURE 6.19 *Hendrick Goltzius, The Shepherd Corydon, illustration to Eclogue 2, in Virgil, Bucolica en Georgica, dat is, Ossen-stal en Landt-werck, trans. Karel van Mander (Amsterdam, Zacharias Heyns: 1597). Woodcut, 89 × 70 mm. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LEIDEN.*

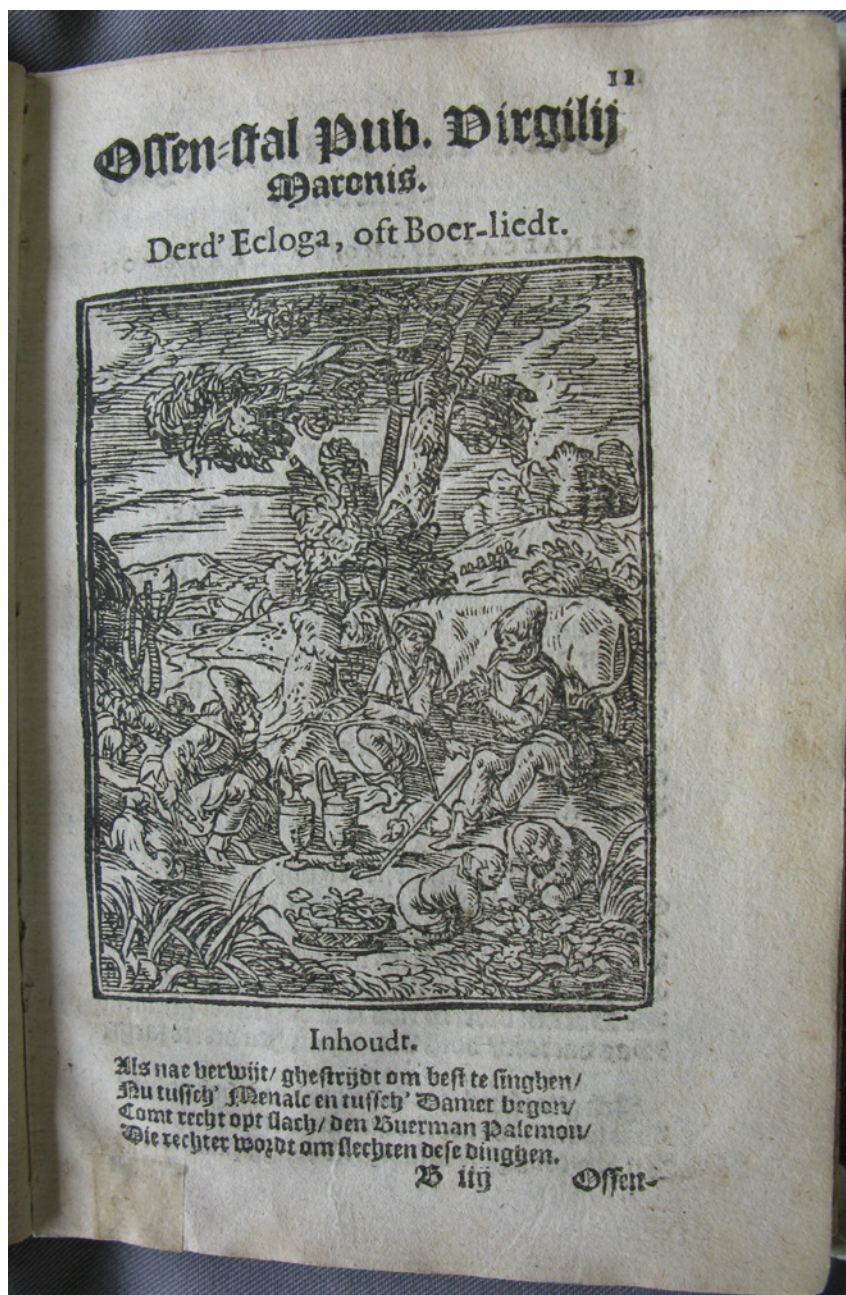


FIGURE 6.20 Hendrick Goltzius, The Contest between Menalcas and Damoetas, illustration to Eclogue 3, in *Virgil, Bucolica en Georgica, dat is, Ossen-stal en Landt-werck*, trans. Karel van Mander (Amsterdam, Zacharias Heyns: 1597). Woodcut, 89 × 70 mm.

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in the illustrations to *Eclogues* 2 and 7 [Figs. 6.19 & 6.21], while the view at right to a high cliff bears resemblance to the vista in the illustration to *Eclogue* 6 and to the crag in the illustration to *Eclogue* 10 [Figs. 6.22 & 6.23].⁸⁹ True to Virgil, the majority of the woodcuts depicts woods, groves, copses, and spin-nies, as the bosky setting in which the shepherds and fisher folk disport. The same hold true, of course, for the *Portrait*.

Goltzius may even have co-financed Heyns's Dutch edition of the *Eclogues and Georgics*, which begins with a dedicatory poem addressed to him by Van Mander, who compares his close friend to Gaius Clinius Maecenas, the wealthy Roman patron of arts and letters [Fig. 6.24]:

"Aen constriicksten Heer H. Goltzius."

Sonnet.

Den Mantuaen hoe hy in soet Latijn
Van Amaryl heeft Echo leeren singhen:
Sijn wetten oock om t'landt tot mildtheyt dwinghen,
Ghesonghen dy in Vlaems, laet danckich zijn.

O Goltzi vry ons eeuwer ciersel, mijn
Mecenas groot: Want Schilders sonderlinghen
Nut scheppen uyt Poëten, jae een dinghen
Is constich Dicht, en Schildery int schijn.

Dan d'een is stom, en d'ander can wel spreken:
D'een verwich wijst, en d'ander met bestreken
By-woorden inhaelt, en duydt al watt begheert.

Niemandt hier in Virgilio was gh'leken,
Maer wat belanght mijn doen te minst, ick reken,
Ist lovens niet, soo ist onschuldens weert.⁹⁰

"To the Most Artful Mr. H. Goltzius."

Sonnet.

The manner in which the Mantuan
Taught Echo to sing, in sweet Latin, about Amaryllys:
And his laws for compelling the land to bear fruit,
Sung now in Flemish, may they make you grateful.

89 On the woodcuts illustrating *Eclogues* 2 and 7, see *ibid.* 160, 165; on the woodcuts illustrating *Eclogues* 6 and 10, see *ibid.* 160, 168.

90 Virgilius, *Bucolica en Georgica*, trans. Van Mander, fol. A i verso. On this dedicatory poem, see Jacobsen, *Carel van Mander* 70–71. From this point on, Van Mander's Dutch verses are embedded in my text to call attention to the wit and elegance of his prosody.



FIGURE 6.21 Hendrick Goltzius, The Contest between Corydon and Thyrsis, illustration to Eclogue 7, in *Virgil, Bucolica en Georgica, dat is, Ossen-stal en Landt-werck*, trans. Karel van Mander (Amsterdam, Zacharias Heyns: 1597). Woodcut, 88 × 69 mm.

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FIGURE 6.22 Hendrick Goltzius, The Binding of Silenus, illustration to Eclogue 6, in *Virgil, Bucolica en Georgica, dat is, Ossen-stal en Landt-werck*, trans. Karel van Mander (Amsterdam, Zacharias Heyns: 1597). Woodcut, 88 × 70 mm. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, LEIDEN.

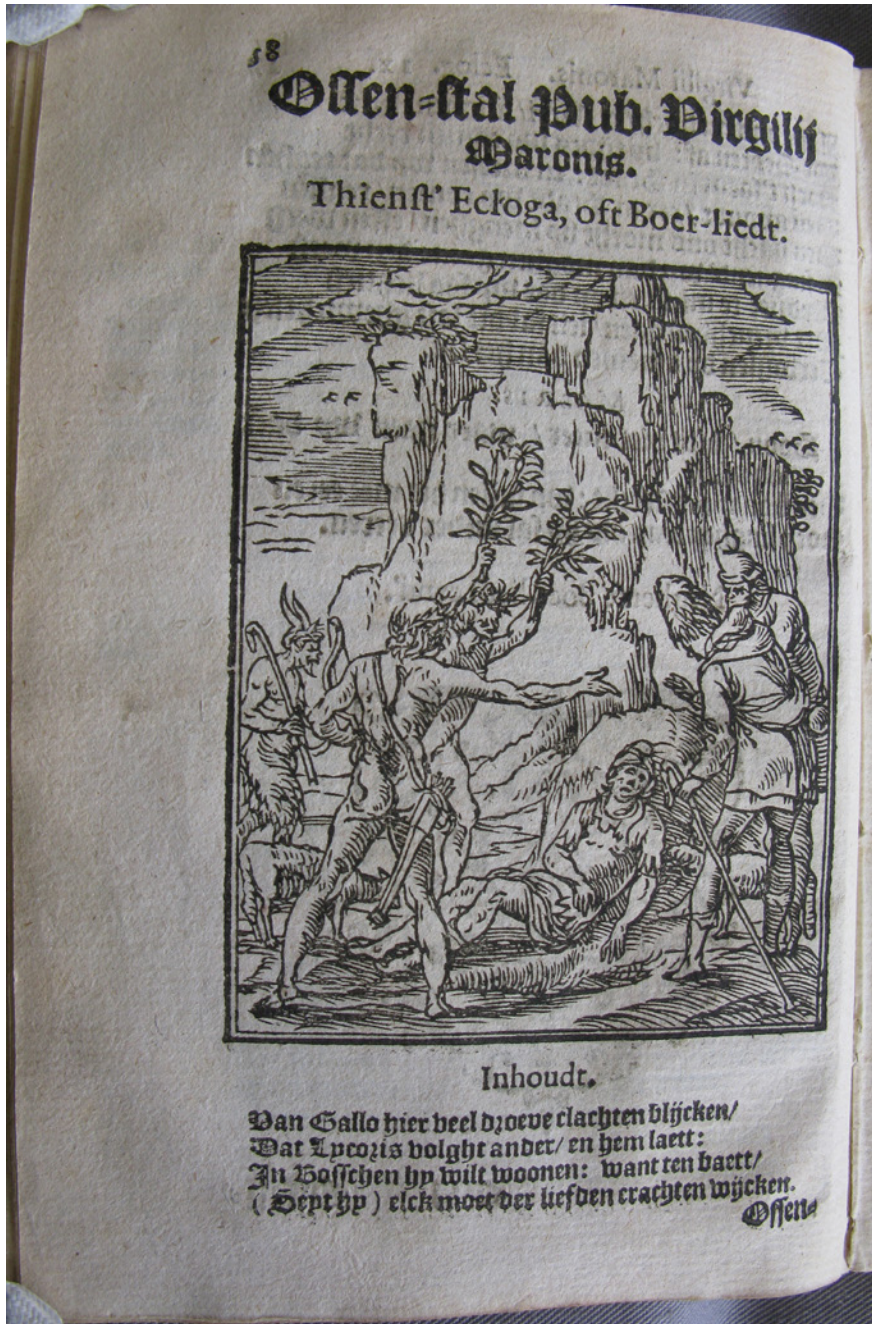


FIGURE 6.23 *Hendrick Goltzius, Gallus Pines for Lycoris, illustration to Eclogue 10, in Virgil, Bucolica en Georgica, dat is, Ossen-stal en Landt-werck, trans. Karel van Mander (Amsterdam, Zacharias Heyns: 1597). Woodcut, 89 × 70 mm.*
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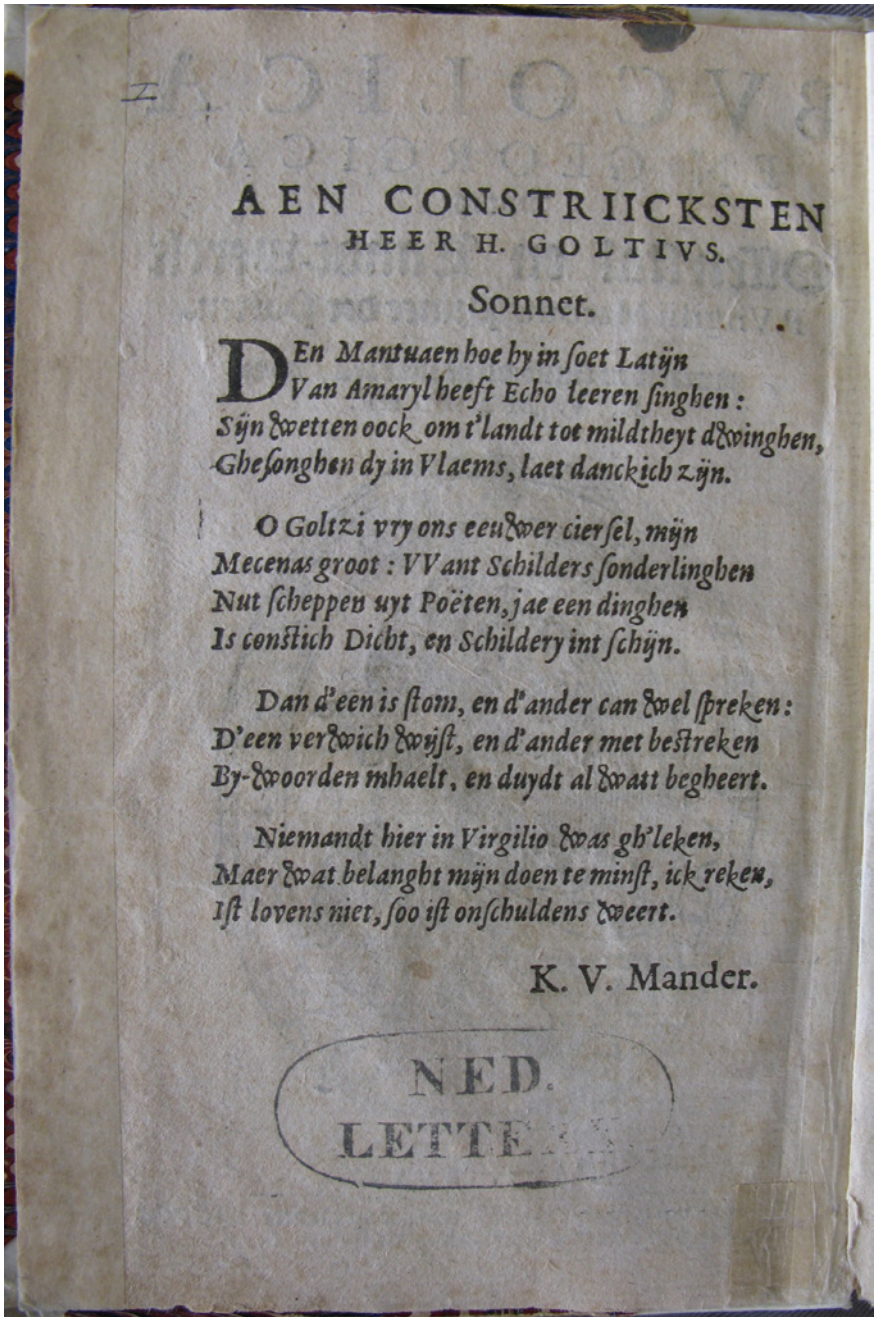


FIGURE 6.24 Karel van Mander, "Aen constriicksten Heer H. Goltius", in *Virgil, Bucolica en Georgica*, dat is, Ossen-stal en Landt-werck, trans. Karel van Mander (Amsterdam, Zacharias Heyns: 1597), fol. A i verso.

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O Goltzius, true ornament of our age,
 My great Maecenas: is it not so that painters
 Derive special advantage from Poets, and indeed,
 Are not artful Poetry and Painting, in likeness, one thing.

For the one is silent, the other eloquent:
 The one with strokes of color shows, what the other with epitheta as its
 strokes
 Attains and signifies according to its desire.

None can here compare to Virgil,
 But concerning what I have done, I reckon it,
 If not praiseworthy, at least worthy to be exonerated.

Van Mander draws an explicit parallel between Virgil's (and his own) poetry and Goltzius's art: the eloquence of both are praised, as also their capacity to render equivalently in strokes of colors or of epithets, which is to say, with words as colorful as images, and images as poetic as words, whatever they wish to express. The reference to Echo and Amaryllis frames this assertion by introducing the trope of the living tree as the *sine qua non* of Virgilian pastoral. The allusion is to *Eclogue* 1:4–5 (*Bucolica* 1:7–9):

Du Tityr luy int schaeuw leert t'wyl' int ronde,
 Den Bosschen dy nae schallen uyt den monde,
 Dijn liefst schoon Amaryllis met lust.⁹¹

You, Tityrus, at ease in the shade, whiling away the time with a rondel,
 Teach the woods to give voice to your song, to resound
 Joyfully with your 'most dear, beautiful Amaryllis'.

Van Mander inserts the phrase 'uyt den monde' ('from the mouth'), which has a dual purchase, attaching both to the mouth of the poet and to the trees giving voice to the poet's song, as if they too had mouths. The tree with a voice and, by implication, a face thus becomes the touchstone of Tityrus, Virgil, and Van Mander's pastoral eloquence. The further inference is that all of them speak, in one way or another, the language of love.

Speaking trees that move about freely and feel emotions deeply figure large in *Eclogues* 1, 4, and 6, in particular. In *Eclogue* 1:38–39 (*Bucolica* 1:73–74), for instance, the 'pines high and green' are said to have 'called after Tityrus', longing for him to return from his trip to Rome (where he had gone to plead for

91 "Ossen-stal Pub. Virgilij Maronis. D'eerst' Ecloga, oft Boer-liedt", in Virgilius, *Bucolica en Georgica*, trans. Van Mander 1.

the return of expropriated land).⁹² The pines themselves become living images of a kinsman or lover 'pining' for his or her absent beloved. In *Eclogue* 4:30 (*Bucolica* 4:57–58), 'the stubborn oak distils dewy honey' to herald the birth of the child who inaugurates a new golden age.⁹³ The poet's voice is one and the same as that of the 'bosky groves', more literally, the 'wild, forested places' ('wildernissen'), announces Virgil in *Eclogue* 6:1–3, 9–11 (*Bucolica* 6:1–3, 14–17):

Ons sangs-Godin Thali' onachte niet
 Te singhen eerst des Spracusers liet,
 Noch schaemd' haer niet te wonen bin den Woude.
 [...]
 Soo wie bevaen met liefd' dit leest, sal wel
 Bekennen saen dat ons neer Tamarissen
 U prijsen hoogh, en alle wildernissen
 U singhen lof, O Vare!⁹⁴

Our Muse Thalia disdained not to sing at first a Syracusan strain,
 Nor blushed she to dwell in woods.
 [...]
 If any there be who take up and read this book with love,
 He shall quickly see how our lowly Tamarisks
 And bosky groves praise you to the skies,
 O Varus, extolling you in song!

Here the poet's love of his subject is identified with the power to make trees sing, as if the conferral of human characteristics were an expression of his high regard for Varus, and, more than this, the very source of his affectionate poem of praise in Varus's honor. The parallels to Goltzius's engraved portrait of Frederick are, I think, evident: here, too, anthropomorphosis and the trope of the living tree function as tokens of love and esteem, of the engraver's powers of poetic invention, and of his command over the pastoral mode, with its exilic subject-matter and mixed emotions, by turns wistful and joyful, hopeful and melancholy, lovingly complaisant and petulantly loving.

Virgil's *Eclogue* 6 is also a locus classicus, like Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, of the Orphic imagery that permeates the *Portrait of Frederick de Vries* and licenses its

92 Ibid. 3: 'Maer hierom wast, did ded' u soo verlangen / Tityrus was van huys nae Room' aldoen / T'riep al om dy, Pijnboomen hoogh en groen'.

93 "Ossen-stal Pub. Virgilij Maronis. Vierd' Ecloga, oft Boer-liedt", in *ibid.* 22: 'Jae douwich seem ghesien in bosschen werdt / Staen sweeten uyt den Eycke-boomen herdt'.

94 "Ossen-stal Pub. Virgilij Maronis. Sest' Ecloga, oft Boer-liedt", in *ibid.* 33.

distinctive version of the living tree trope [Fig. 6.6]. The trope proliferates in the justly celebrated song of Silenus—a hymn to the generative power of poësis—that constitutes the metapoetic subject of this eclogue.⁹⁵ Indeed, *Eclogue* 6, as the opening apostrophe to Virgil's Arcadian-Sicilian Muse indicates, consists of a poem within a poem: it opens with the poet's invocation of his song, the recital of which takes the prosopopoeial form of the singing grove ('Bekennen saen dat ons neer Tamarissen / U prijsen hoogh, en alle wildernissen / U singhen lof'⁹⁶); the arboreal song that is then sung spins the tale of drunken Silenus, whom the shepherds Chromis and Mnasyllus, along with their accomplice, the Naiad Aegle, compel to sing; his song, in turn, not only describes but reenacts the creation of the world, its miraculous power nowhere more evident than in the anthropomorphic effect it exercises on the surrounding trees (*Eclogue* 6:24–28; *Bucolica* 6:47–52):

'Ontbindt my doch, my t'hebben int ghesichte
Is u ghenoech, weet wat ghy voor ghedichte
Begheert: want dicht te loon en krijghdy maer',
[...]

Doe werdt terstont sijn best' hy daer te singen,
Doe eenen hoop van Faunen mocht ghy springen
En dansen sien met vreuchden onghestilt,
In t'groene veldt oock al t'ghedierte wilt:
Van Eycken stijf de toppen hoogh verheven
Men al verbaest oock schudden sach en beven.⁹⁷

'Unbind me then, to have had me in your sights
Is sufficient, know then the poem
You desire: for you shall have it as your reward,
[...]

Then at once he sings his all,
Then might you see a band of Fauns leaping
And dancing with joy unbounded,
Wild beasts, too, in the green field [dancing]:
And astonished also see the unbending oaks
Shake and bend their tops raised high.

95 On the song of Silenus, see Segal C., *Poetry and Myth in Ancient Pastoral: Essays on Theocritus and Virgil* (Princeton: 1981; reprint ed., Princeton: 2014) 330–338.

96 "Ossen-stal Pub. Virgilij Maronis. Sest' Ecloga, oft Boer-liedt", in Virgilius, *Bucolica en Georgica*, trans. Van Mander 33.

97 Ibid. 34.

Silenus's *ghedichte* is a song about trees brought to life, more accurately, about human beings transformed into living, breathing trees, capable of sense, feeling, and, in some cases, even thought. His poem, in substance and effect, adumbrates the song Orpheus sings on the Thracian hill after the second death of Eurydice, which Ovid, in emulation of *Eclogue* 6, would later incorporate into *Metamorphoses* x. Silenus tells, for example, the story of Phaeton's sisters, metamorphosed into alders by grief for their fallen brother (*Eclogue* 6:61–63; *Bucolica* 6:107–109):

Oock Phaëtons ghesusters hy ghenieten,
Doet bitter schorss' om t'lijf, en oock opschieten
(Lancx vlieten groen bemoscht) in elsen lanck.⁹⁸

And Phaeton's sisters he also makes to feel
Their bodies encased in bitter bark, and to spring upward
(Green with moss, beside flowing streams) as lofty alders.

He then relates how the Roman poet Gallus, Virgil's revered contemporary, was strolling one day along the banks of the river Permessus, when he encountered one of the Muses; she led him high into the Aonian hills, where her fellow Muses rose to greet him, and where Linus, the brother of Orpheus, presented him with the pipes once played by Hesiod; these were the reeden instruments whose melody had brought the ash trees of Helicon to life, causing them to leave the mountainside and gather round the poet. Gallus must now use them, urges Linus, to sing about the birth of the Aeolic Grynean grove, sacred to Apollo; Gallus's poetry shall reanimate the Grinean woodland, renewing Apollo's love for it, avers Silenus (*Eclogue* 6:64–73; *Bucolica* 6:110–127):

Nae desen noch hy doe van Gallo sanck,
Hoe dat hy lancx de vliet Permessi dwaelde,
Van waer hem een der neghen Sisters haelde,
En leyd' hum op Aoni bergh: en hoe
Gants Phebi Choor opstaend' hem eerde doe:
Jae Linus oock den Herder, (die men hebben
Sacht om sijn hayr, gheblomt' en bitter eppen
Cruyt tot cieraet) hoe hy met dit beleeft
En Godlijck veers hem aenghesproken heeft.
Dees pijpen siet, de Muses groot van weerden
U gheven, wilts' in danck van hen aenveerden:

98 Ibid. 36.

Hier mede plach den ouden Ascrijt
 Al spelend' doen van Berghen t'sijner tijt
 Nae hem verleydt, ten dale neder reyen
 Den esschen herd: en oock met dees schalmeyen
 Ghyspelen sult van t'Grynei lust Woudt
 U afcomst' al, op dat Apoll' en houd
 Gheen bosschen el soo hoogh in weerden prijsich.⁹⁹

After these [sisters of Phaeton], he then sang about Gallus
 Strolling alongside the river Permessus,
 Whence one of the nine Sisters led him
 Up into the Aonian mountain: and [he sang about] how
 The whole of Apollo's choir stood to do [Gallus] honor:
 And the herdsman Linus as well (whose
 Locks one might see ornamented with tender blossoms and bitter parley),
 How he addressed him with these courteous and godly verses.
 'Behold, the great and worthy Muses give you these pipes,
 Which accept with grateful thanks.
 Herewith was the ancient Ascrean wont to play betimes,
 Drawing down from the mountains
 The flock of ash trees: and with these pipes
 Shall you play the very origin of the pleasurable Grynean woodland,
 Causing Apollo to love no grove so much, nor prize any other so highly'.

As Hesiod's poetry transformed the ash trees of Ascrea, mobilizing them into an audience for his song, so Gallus shall regenerate the Grynean woodland, turning these trees into a habitation and audience for Apollo, and thus seducing him to inhabit and to love this sacred grove.

And finally, Silenus sings the songs that Apollo sang in ancient Lacedemonia, when (again like Orpheus) he mourned the loss of Daphne, enchanting the river Eurotas so greatly that it bade the waterside laurels to learn these songs and ever after echo them heavenward. On this account, Silenus's song is a poem about trees that poetry brings to life and thus enables to sing the poet's lifegiving songs (*Eclogue* 6:82–84; *Bucolica* 6:142–148):

99 Ibid. On the *mise-en-abyme* of poems within poems in *Eclogue* 6, especially as this pertains to Orpheus and Silenus as figures of Gallus, see Smith R.A., *Poetic Allusion and Poetic Embrace in Ovid and Virgil* (Ann Arbor: 1997) 84–89.

In somm', in sang hy noch heeft gaen vertoonen
 Al wat Eurot uyt Phebi soete toonen
 Vernomen heeft, hier voormaels oock wat daer
 Den Lauren vry wel g'luckich openbaer
 Bevolen was: dit ginghen diepe dalen
 Door wederslach te samen al verhalen
 Hier boven oock den Hemelschen ghestert.¹⁰⁰

In sum, [Silenus] gave forth in song
 All the sweet sounds that Eurotas had gleaned from Phoebus,
 Which formerly the laurels had been enjoined happily to impart:
 All these tales the deep dales did echo upward
 To the starry vault of heaven.

The reference to Hylas, foster-son of Hercules, that prefaces the torrent of Orphic and Apollonian song decanted by Silenus, would have subtly adverted to the situation of Dierick and Frederick, a loving father and beloved son ineluctably sundered. Based on Theocritus's *Idyll* 13, Virgil's invocation of Hylas, lost to Hercules when nymphs of the stream Pegae secretly kidnapped the boy, describes how the woods echoed with the calls of his fellow Argonauts, futilely searching for him. In a marginal gloss, Van Mander denominates Hylas 'Hercules's boy' ('Herculis jongen') (*Eclogue* 6:43–44; *Bucolica* 76–78):

Hier voeghd' hy by noch in wat borne bleven
 Was Hyl', en waer door tschippers luyd geschal
 Oock Hyla, Hyl', al t'strand gaf wederschal.¹⁰¹

Here, too, he adds the name of the spring where
 Hylas remained, and how the sailors' loud calls
 Echoed along the strand.

100 "Ossen-stal Pub. Virgilij Maronis. Sest' Ecloga, oft Boer-liedt", in Virgilius, *Bucolica en Georgica*, trans. Van Mander 37.

101 Ibid. 35. Van Mander identifies Hylas as the son of King Theiodamas of Thessaly and the nymph who first saw him, as Printina: 'Hylas Theodamas Thessalisch Coninghs soon, Herculis jongen, ginck aen een borne om water te halen, werdt van de Nympe Printina in haer borns ghetrocken, daer hy bleef'. On the treatment of love in *Idyll* 13, see Mastronarde D.J., "Theocritus's *Idyll* 13: Love and the Hero", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 99 (1968) 273–290.

The separation of Hercules and Hylas thus supplies a point of comparison, setting the tone for all the tales that follow.

Seen in light of Virgil's *Eclogues* or, more particularly, Van Mander's *Bucolica*, the anthropomorphic trope of the living tree can be construed as an allusion to the poet's or, in Goltzius's case, engraver's art, epitomized by his prosopopoeial ability to enliven nature, giving it a face and/or voice. The Virgilian trees are, more often than not, connected to stories of love, loss, and separation—Apollo and Daphne, Phaeton and the Phaetonides, and, implicitly, Orpheus and Eurydice—in relation to which the living tree serves as an antidote or consolatory remedy. Sung to console himself, Apollo's songs enrapture Eurotas and his laurels; the metamorphosis of the Phaetonides into alders puts an end to their inconsolable grief. The association between living tree and corrective to sorrow perfectly complements the prophylactic function of Goltzius's portrait print, which was designed to bridge the distance between Frederick and Dierick, assuaging both father and son and thereby warding off sorrow.

The use of the metamorphic Virgilian tree as an index of the poet-engraver's creative power calls to mind the epithet *Proteus-Vertumnus* that Van Mander would use in the *Schilder-Boeck* to characterize Goltzius's inimitable *teyckenconst*. The gods Proteus and Vertumnus shared the ability to transform themselves into the appearance of anything in nature, and Van Mander therefore utilized them as figures of Goltzius's mimetic competence: in the "Life of Goltzius" (probably composed in the later 1590s, around the time Goltzius designed and engraved the *Portrait of Frederick de Vries*), he is construed as a latter-day Proteus cum Vertumnus because he so persuasively imitates everything available to sight, not only the things of nature but also of art, producing prints so like those of Albrecht Dürer or Lucas van Leyden, that they can qualify as new works by these long deceased masters. It is surely worth observing, with respect to Van Mander's usage, that the Protean trope can be related to the transformative figure of the living tree, by way of allusion to the song of Orpheus. In Virgil's fourth *Georgic*, Aristaeus, the patron-god of husbandry and bee-keeping, forces the divine seer Proteus to reveal why the gods have cursed his hives; the answer lies in his fatal pursuit of Eurydice who stepped on the viper that killed her, while attempting to escape the enamored Aristaeus. Proteus then recounts to Aristaeus the entire story of Orpheus and Eurydice, describing how the disconsolate poet, after the second loss of his wife, sat for seven months beneath a lofty crag, singing songs of lamentation so touching that fearsome tigers were pacified and hard oaks drawn to his side (*Georgic* 4:507–510). Van Mander, in the *Landt-werck* (*Country-Labor*), his translation of the *Georgics*, renders this passage as follows:

Sy segghen dat hy seven Maenden truerich
 Volcom'lijck heeft, nae een gheweent' geduerich,
 Aen hooghe clip by Strymons woeste vloed,
 Ondr' holen coudt, daer hy in sijn ghemoed
 Sijn avontuer bedenckend' overleyde:
 Den Tygers wreedt oock met sijn versen bleyde,
 Die hy versacht van wildt ghemaect heeft tem:
 Jae track en leyd' haerdd' eycken oock met hem.¹⁰²

They say that for seven months
 He wept constantly, altogether overcome by sorrow,
 Beside a steep cliff and Strymon's lonely stream,
 Sheltered in a cool grotto, where deeply pensive,
 He pondered his fate:
 Fearsome tigers—even they rejoiced in his verses,
 Changed by him from wild to tame:
 The stubborn oaks—they, too, he drew and guided to him.

If the figure of Proteus, as applied to Goltzius, signifies the metamorphic, mimetic power of his semi-divine *teyckenconst*, it also connects implicitly to the allied figure of Orpheus and, specifically, to the generative power of his poetic art, as expressed in its pacifying effect on wild beasts and enlivening, humanizing effect on once insensible, now sentient and sensate trees. The arboreal image of emergent, human features is by definition protean, in that it shows one thing changing into another, vegetal form becoming animal form. Seen through a Virgilian lens, it is also Orphic, an allusion strengthened by the pacific behavior and symbolism of the doves and the amiable, compliant dog accompanying Frederick. The setting—bosky foreground hill, distant woodland, and waterside cliff—recalls, as we have seen, the place where Orpheus went to mourn, attracting animals and trees to join him. It also closely resembles the first age of nature, as portrayed by Silenus, whose poetic image of the newly minted world Goltzius seems here to have translated into a pictorial image of sun, earth, sea, mountains, woods, and the creatures inhabiting them (*Eclogue* 6:31–40; *Bucolica* 6:57–72):

Want siet, hy songh hoe int groot ijdel rondt
 Eerst alle dingh ghesaeyt te zijn ontstondt,
 Elck Element, Aerd' Water, Locht verheven,

102 "T'landt-werck P. Virgilij Maronis. Het vierde boeck", in *ibid.* 172.

En t'suyver Vyer, hoe alle dingh becleven
 Van eersten aen uyt d'Elementen quam:
 De Weerelt waer sy haer gheslacht af nam,
 Hoe d'aerd' eerst sacht heeft hardicheyt genoten,
 En hoe in haer Nera wierdt besloten,
 Jae hoe allencx oock alle dingh eenpaer
 Ghedaente creegh: hoe d'Aerd' oock wonderbaer
 Toesach wan sy't nieu Sonschijn heeft vernomen,
 En hoe dat oock van hooghe Wolcken comen
 De Reghens af: hoe wilde Bosschen op
 Ghesteghen zijn: en hoe lancx menich top
 Der Berghen woest onkenbaer ginghen swieren
 Dwalich verstroyt de wilde seldstaem Dieren.¹⁰³

For see, he sang how from the vast empty globe
 Came forth every sown thing,
 Each Element—Earth, Water, Air—raised up,
 And chaste Fire; how each individual thing
 First arose from out of the Elements:
 The World, whence she took form,
 How it first pleased the soft earth to become firm
 And delimit Nereus [god of the sea],
 And how every single thing did gradually
 Obtain its form: how the Earth wondered
 To receive and behold the Sun's new light,
 And how from high clouds the first
 Rains came: how wild woods
 Climbed upward: and how on many a bare summit,
 Animals strange and wild came wandering,
 Scattered amongst mountains that know them not.

The pastoral allusiveness of the print, its Orphic imagery of animals tamed and trees brought to life, of shining sky, cliff-edged sea, and verdant hills and mountains, bring to mind the constituents of Silenus's song, which is to say that the *Portrait of Frederick de Vries* implicitly casts its inventor Goltzius in the part of the mythopoetic songster who epitomizes the lyrical art of bucolic image-making. In this particular sense, Goltzius can be seen to trump even Orpheus, as Virgil's opening account of Silenus's song allows us to infer:

103 "Ossen-stal Pub. Virgilij Maronis. Sest' Ecloga, oft Boer-liedt", in *ibid.* 34–35.

Van Eycken stijf de toppen hoogh verheven
 Men al verbaest oock schudden sach en beven:
 Noyt door 'tghesangh van haren Phebus was
 Soo seer verblijdt de clip van den Parnas,
 Door Orptheo Rhodop', Ismarus mede,
 Verwondert soo, als door Sileen dees stede.¹⁰⁴

And astonished also see the unbending oaks
 Shake and bend their tops raised high.
 Not by the song of her Phoebus was
 The summit of Parnassus made so joyful,
 Nor did Rhodope and Ismarus together
 So wonder at Orpheus, as this place did at Silenus.¹⁰⁵

The many allusions to the *Eclogues* in the *Portrait of Frederick de Vries* open the print to further Virgilian readings that would surely been both evident and welcome to Dierick [Fig. 6.6]. The setting and attributes—the rocky crag at right, the boy's dove held proudly aloft, for instance—evoke the signs of Tityrus's good fortune, wistfully enumerated by Meliboeus in *Eclogue* 1:46–47, 51–52, 56–58 (*Bucolica* 1:80–82, 87–88, 95–100):

Ghy sult gerust, O ghy oudt g'luckich Man!
 Behouden noch u acker-velden dan,
 Voor u ghenoech in grootten van beringhe,
 [...]
 Oudt g'luckich Man, hier wert van u de coelt
 Tusch vlieten dy seer wel bekend bevoelt,
 En tusch oock dees ghewijdde bornen heylich,
 [...]
 Ter ander zijd' u sijnen sanck sal doen
 Den snoeyer hoogh, daer onder clip int groen,
 U sorgh oock noch die Vallems heesch van kelen,
 De Tortel oock sal op den Olm quelen
 Hoogh in de locht, niet latend' haer ghesucht,
 Soo leefdy hier altydts in u ghenucht.¹⁰⁶

104 Ibid. 34.

105 Mount Rhodope was Orpheus's birthplace, Ismarus the place where he mourned Eurydice, sang trees into life, and was slain by the Ciconian Bacchantes.

106 "Ossen-stal Pub. Virgilij Maronis. E'eerst' Ecloga, oft Boer-liedt", in *ibid.* 3–4.

So shall you be at peace, O fortunate elder!
 Keep then your pasture lands
 Extending far enough for you.

[...]

Old, happy man, here will you be cooled
 Beside familiar streams
 And springs consecrated and holy,
 [...]

On the other side, from on high, the woodsman
 Beneath a towering rock, amidst greenery, shall sing to you,
 Ringed doves, hoarse of throat, attend you,
 The turtle dove, too, shall coo softly from the lofty elm,
 Not ceasing to sigh,
 And so live you here, ever at your pleasure.

Frederick's peaceful circumstances, the compliant animals around him, and his calm, knowing, smiling face are accommodations to Virgil's prophetic description of the golden boy who restores peace to the Roman imperium, in *Eclogue* 4:5–10, 18–21, 60–63 (*Bucolica* 4:7–20, 36–42, 112–120).

De laetst' eeuw' is wel vry om in verblijden,
 Aencomstich nu: waer van al in voortijden
 In verse heeft der Cumen Jonckvrouw soet,
 Voorseyt al veel, als een voorsegster vroet,
 Van d'eeuwen oock die groot en heerlijk orden
 Begint al heel gheboren nu te worden.

De Maeght hercomt nu van den Hemel neer,
 En t'soete Rijck Saturni keert oock verheven
 Ghesonden af een nieu gheslacht becleven:
 Lucina cuysch bejonsticht doch dit kint,
 T'welck nu ghebaert te wesen eerst begint.
 Dat al door hem het ijs'ren volck ophoude,
 En al opstaet ter Weerelt volck van goude,
 [...]

Maer o ghy kindt! self d'aerde t'uwer jeuchden
 Opvoedingh dy, sal d'eerste giften doen,
 [...] Ja comen
 De Geyten t'huys met ulders sullen dick
 Gheswollen: oock int kudd'en wert geen schrick.
 [...]

Nu, o cleen kindt! begint en wilt ghewennen
 U Moer allencx met lachen toe te kennen,
 [...]
 Want wie noch noyt van Vaer en Moer belacht
 En was, hem niet Godt Genius en acht
 Zijn tafel weerd't [...].¹⁰⁷

The final gladsome age approaches:
 Which in times past
 The Cumean Maiden, a wise prophetess,
 Much did prophesy in sweet verse:
 The great and glorious sequence of ages
 Now begins to be born forth.

The Virgin returns, descending from heaven,
 And the sweet reign of Saturn starts anew:
 Now is sent from on high
 A new generation to endure:
 Chaste Lucina favors this newborn child,
 Through whom the iron folk shall cease,
 And golden folk rise up unto the World.
 [...]

But upon you, O child, the earth herself
 Bestows her nourishing gifts,
 [...] Goats, their udders milk-swollen
 Shall come home to you: cattle shall know no fear,
 [...]

Now, young child, accustom yourself
 To recognize you Mother with a smile,
 [...]
 For he who never smiled upon his Father and Mother,
 His table no sheltering God did honor
 With his presence [...].

Since *Eclogue* 4:17 (*Bucolica* 4:34–35) credits the son's father with having initiated the peace that his scion shall now convert into a true golden age, the implied laudation of Frederick doubles as praise of Dierick.¹⁰⁸

Finally, what species of tree is it that accompanies Frederick? The thick, boled trunk and clusters of lobate leaves with scalloped borders suggest that

¹⁰⁷ "Ossen-stal Pub. Virgilij Maronis. Vierd' Ecloga, oft Boer-liedt", in *ibid.* 21–22, 24.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 22: 'En boven dien uys Vaders vrome daden / Hun deughden al aensien om u beraden'.

the tree is an oak. The choice of species is surely significant, given that Andrea Alciato, in his wildly popular *Emblematum liber*, had included it amongst the fourteen arboreal emblems that close the book. The oak, states Alciato, is dear to Jove, who preserves and cherishes humankind, and for this reason, the oaken crown is awarded to the citizen who has served and fostered his fellow citizens [Fig. 6.25].¹⁰⁹ Alciato adds in a corollary epigram that as the oak formerly fed the ancients with its acorns, so now, though we no longer eat its fruits, Jove's favorite tree continues to serve us, by complaisantly offering the welcome gift of shade.¹¹⁰ Seen in this light, the oak touches on Goltzius, whose readiness to preserve, shelter, and cherish his ward it asseverates. But if Goltzius is the latter-day Orpheus whose Phidian print has brought this tree to life, he is also likened to one of the trees entranced and enlivened by the poet, that then willingly offered him its attention and cooling shade. In this sense, the tree becomes an attribute of Frederick, whose presence is seen to summon up this arboreal wonder. The tree, then, makes reference to the Orphic identity of Goltzius and his ward, and to their mutual devotion.

"Epilogue"

Goltzius explored the allusive potential of embryonic faces in several other *penwercken*, nowhere more subtly than in the *Venus, Bacchus, and Ceres* of 1593, drawn in different shades of brown on parchment, and the *Venus Awakens and Receives the Gifts of Ceres and Bacchus from a Satyr and a Pan*, drawn in pen and ink on blue-gray prepared canvas, and brushed in oils [Figs. 6.4 & 6.26].¹¹¹ In the *Venus, Bacchus, and Ceres*, as discussed above, Goltzius embeds alternative faces of the three gods (who once again enact the apotheism of Terence) in the boled tree trunk beside Venus's countenance, in the vaporous smoke above Cupid's flame, and in the hillside beneath Ceres's draped left leg [Figure 6.4]. Bacchus's other face is that of the faun-like satyr standing deferentially behind him. The surrogate visages are dark, rough, even inchoate, whereas the gods'

109 Alciato Andrea, *Emblemata V. C. Andreae Alciati Mediolanensis iurisconsulti, cum facili & compendiosa explicatione, qua obscura illustrantur, dubiaque omnia solvuntur*, ed. Claude Mignault (Antwerp, Apud Christophorum Plantinum: 1584) 426: 'Grata Iovi est quercus, qui nos servatque fovetque / Servanti civem querna corona datus'.

110 Ibid.: 'Glande aluit veteres, sola nunc proficit umbra: / Sic quoque sic arbor officiosa Iovis'.

111 On *Venus Awakens and Receives the Gifts of Ceres and Bacchus*, see Nichols, 'Pen Works' of Hendrick Goltzius 19–53; and idem, *The Paintings of Hendrick Goltzius* (Doornspijk: 2013)

131–133.



FIGURE 6.25 *Andrea Alciato, Emblemata V.C. Andreae Alciati Mediolanensis iurisconsulti, ed. Claude Minoes (Antwerp, Christopher Plantin: 1584), duodecimo.*
THE NEWBERRY LIBRARY, CHICAGO.



FIGURE 6.26 *Hendrick Goltzius, Venus Awakens and Receives the Gifts of Ceres and Bacchus, ca. 1599–1602. Pen and brown ink, brush and oils, on blue-gray prepared canvas, 105 × 80 cm.*

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faces are radiant, joyful, and refined—to demonstrate, in Van Mander's terms, that the character of ancient divinities such as Venus was many and various, comprising a lightsome and a darksome aspect, a *hemelsche* (heavenly) and a *ghemeen* (common, earthly) temperament.

Venus Awakens depicts Venus, half-recumbent and still somnolent, arising to motion and consciousness from a deep slumber, at the prompting of Cupid, a Pan, and a young satyr [Figure 6.26]. The Pan and satyr stand proxy for Bacchus and Ceres, offering their gifts to Venus—a ripened cluster of grapes and a garland of fruits, flowers, and vegetables. Cupid's torch brightly enlumines his mother, turning her blue-gray flesh pink, as if tinting it with life. The smoke coiling upward from the flame transforms at right into a silhouette that echoes the profile of Venus's brow, nose, and chin, at left into a chimera with leonine features (half-closed eye at top, snout and jaw below). Another feline head, with two small round eyes above distended cheeks, emerges just below, from the side of the chimeric lion's muzzle.

These composite forms, part human, part bestial, function as indices of the goddess' rising power to instigate what the mythographer Lilio Gregorio Giraldi, in his treatise *De deis gentium* of 1548, describes as *terriculamenta* (bugbears), a species of dreamlike phantasmata.¹¹² The notion that Venus can produce such an effect originates in the association between her erotic potency and that of *nymphae loci* ('nymphs of the place'), as codified by Francesco Colonna in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Venice, Aldus Manutius: 1499), and specifically in the woodcut on folio eI recto, illustrating the Greek motto 'Panton Tokadi' ('To the mother of all') [Figure 6.27].¹¹³ Sheltered by a tree and accompanied by a Pan and two *panisci* (little Pans), Colonna's sleeping *nympha* is the precedent for Goltzius's drowsy Venus. In transferring to her one of the epitaphs of Venus—mother of all—Colonna identifies the nymph with Venus the universal progenitrix, whose powers Lucretius had celebrated in the proem to *De rerum natura* (*On the Nature of Things*).¹¹⁴ Conversely, Goltzius transferred to the

112 Giraldi Lilio Gregorio, *De deis gentium* 606. On Giraldi's definition of *terriculamenta* as *lymphatici*, and his characterization of bugbears as 'nympholeptic', see Dempsey C., *Inventing the Renaissance Putto* (Chapel Hill – London: 2001) 125–127.

113 On this motto, which also translates 'all things to the mother', and on its complex relation to the image of a fountain indistinguishable from a sleeping nymph unveiled by a satyr, see Ruvoldt M., *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration: Metaphors of Sex, Sleep, and Dream* (Cambridge: 2004) 111–115.

114 On Colonna's *nympha* (*ninfa*) and her relation to Lucretius's Venus Genetrix, the 'parent of all things', see Meiss M., "Sleep in Venice: Ancient Myths and Renaissance Proclivities", in idem, *The Painter's Choice: Problems in the Interpretation of Renaissance Art* (New York: 1976) 348–362, esp. 223; and Ruvoldt, *Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration* 113–114.



FIGURE 6.27 Anonymous, "Panton Tokadi", in Francesco Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Venice, Aldus Manutius: 1499), fol. el recto. Woodcut, 147.5 × 110 mm. THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK.

goddess the powers of the nymph, whose presence induces all who encounter her to experience the sort of hallucinatory *terrificamenta* made palpable by Cupid's flame. Her erotic sway, on this account, is as illusory as it is irresistible.

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PART 3

Optics, Aesthetics, and the Visual Poetics of Desire



Between the Human and the Divine: The *Majālis al-ushshāq* and the Materiality of Love in Early Safavid Art

Kishwar Rizvi

How long, Sa'eb, will lofty verses pour from your pen?
There's no longer room left in the notebook of lovers' breasts.¹

In this verse by the late Safavid poet, Sa'eb-i Tabrizi (d. 1676), words of devotion are subsumed into the body of the poet. They cover his breast, filling it line by line, as in a notebook. The pen etches the words onto the heart and breast, the ink flowing freely from it like the lover's devotion. The performance of love preoccupied poets such as Sa'eb, defining for them a world filled with desire and devotion. Images of lovers adorned the walls of palaces, were woven into precious carpets, and fired into ceramic vessels.

The period from the fifteenth century onwards has been characterized by scholars such as Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpakli as the 'Age of Beloveds' in which the 'culture of love was not only aesthetic and artistic, but political, dynamic and historical'.² As in the courts and cities of early modern Europe, in the Muslim empires of the period, literature and art were called upon to be responsive to the passions, both worldly and divine. In Safavid Iran, love was an emotion sought out by mystics and princes, the elite and the low-born. It was a relationship between human lovers, but it was most celebrated in the realm of religion. Sufi mystics wrote of love for their spiritual guides, and shaykhs fell in love with their disciples, all in the name of seeking a higher truth, ultimately, divine knowledge.

In medieval Persian poetry, earthly beauty was viewed as a manifestation of immortality, and the love felt for a beautiful person (a young man, a disciple,

1 *Chand rizad Sa'eb az kilak-i tū abyāt-i buland; dar biyāz-i sineh-yi aḥbāb dīgar jah namānand.* Sa'ib-i Tabrizi, *Divan-i Sa'ib Tabrizi*. Qahraman, Q. (ed.), 6 vols. (Tehran: 1364–70/1985–91) III 1212 (Ghazal 2469). I am grateful to Paul Losensky for the citation and translation from the Persian.

2 Andrews W. – Kalpakli W., *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham: 2005) 27.

a shaykh) was a metaphor for the love of God. In her essay on eros in Sufi literature, Annemarie Schimmel wrote that Persian and Turkish poets portrayed a beautiful youth as 'a *shahīd*, a witness of God's eternal beauty and an idol, or *ṣanam*. The beloved was meant to represent Divine beauty, *jamāl*, and at the same time God's *jalāl*, His Majesty.'³ Both beauty and majesty are the attributes of God, meant to also characterize the power wielded by the beloved. Yet by the end of the sixteenth century, the metaphor begins to operate differently, in that love is no longer portrayed solely or primarily to signify divine perfection, but also to represent human, carnal desire.⁴

The conflation of divinity and humanity exemplified political authority and the cultural products of early modern Iran. Safavid rulers were Sufi shaykhs and Shi'i monarchs, whose genealogy linked them with the Prophet Muhammad, propagating a cult of kingship which placed a great deal of emphasis on the adoration of the *ahl al-bayt* ('people of the house,' namely the immediate family of Muhammad). Thus reverence of Shi'i imams was conflated with a love of the ruler, whose body came to represent divinity.⁵ By the end of the sixteenth century, the charismatic king, Shah Abbas I (d. 1629), was represented as a pious and repentant man, his mustache bowed in humility and subservience to God. The chroniclers speak of his raging temper and his good humor; his grand urban projects and his generous charitable works; they write of his barefoot pilgrimages to holy shrines and his raucous evenings watching polo in the great public *maydan* of his capital city, Isfahan. The ideal ruler, as exemplified by Shah 'Abbas, was a flawed man, full of contradictions.⁶

3 Schimmel A., "I Take the Dress of the Body': Eros in Sufi Literature and Life", in Coakley S. (ed.), *Religion and the Body* (Cambridge: 1997) 275.

4 Formally, poets focused on shorter *ghazal* couplets—a romantic genre—that broke from narrative towards aesthetic word play. The genre was closely associated with great Persian poets and mystics, such as Hafiz (d. 1390) and Jami (d. 1492), who wrote on the subject of love through metaphor and allegory, seamlessly overlaying sacred and secular themes. Feuillebois È., "Ghazal in Persian", in Fleet K. – Krämer G. – Matringe D. – Nawas J. – Rowson E. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three*, Brill Online. Reference. Yale University. Accessed 01 June 2016 <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/ghazal-in-persian-COM_27440>.

5 Rizvi K., "The Incarnate Shrine: Commemorating the Cult of Shi'i Imams in Safavid Iran", in Hahn C.- Kelin H. (eds.), *Saints and Sacred Matter: The Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond* (Washington, D.C.: 2015) 289–307.

6 Idem, "The Suggestive Portrait of Shah 'Abbas: Prayer and Likeness in a 1605 Safavid *Shahnama* (Book of Kings)", *The Art Bulletin* 94.2 (2012) 226–250. Equally contradictory were his policies towards Sufism. Whereas the Safaviyya order's traditions were upheld, Sufis themselves were treated pejoratively by the historians of Abbas's court.

In an age in which the shah represented a contradictory persona, of overlapping divinity and humanity, works of art described a world of love and lust of a most earthly kind. As Paul Losensky and others have written, this was a period when ‘eros and sexuality play a significant role in poetry and social life’.⁷ Like paintings and other cultural productions, poetry ‘served as a form of social interaction, courtship, and entertainment among the leisured urban elite’.⁸ Recent studies have shown the manner in which love and emotion were central to understanding visual production in the early modern period, especially in the arts of the book.⁹ Paintings of Christian courtesans, Uzbek slaves, and young pages fill the pages of illustrated epics, poetic anthologies, and album collections of single-sheet paintings. What unites these works is the treatment of the human subject as an aesthetic object and the materiality of the body as a visual trope.

Scholars have noted the increased attention paid to images of love in Safavid art. As Anthony Welch writes, the verbal and visual came together, as did the mortal and immortal ‘to complement each other and themselves establish the relationship between the “two worlds” that is so common in Persian mystical poetry’.¹⁰ Yet by the end of the sixteenth century, the materiality of love and its place in human subjectivity would move beyond its mystical, poetic roots. Carnal pleasure and the pain of unrequited desire would occupy the artists of this period, who discovered new formats—such as the single-sheet painting—within which to explore these subjects.

Deluxe codices were unparalleled in the opportunity they provided for private contemplation, gifting, and exchange. Imperial albums, for example, contained calligraphic specimens as well as paintings and drawings by preeminent artists. A particularly interesting group of paintings explores the theme of ‘prisoner of love’ by depicting captured Uzbek warriors on single-sheet paintings, surrounded by evocative love poetry [Fig. 7.1].¹¹ The body of the prisoner,

7 Losensky P., “Poetics and Eros in Early Modern Persia: The Lovers’ Confection and The Glorious Epistle by Muhtasham Kāshānī”, *Iranian Studies* 42.5 (2009) 745–764, 747.

8 Ibid. “Poetics and Eros in Early Modern Persia” 758.

9 For example, Leoni F. – Natif M., *Eros and Sexuality in Islamic Art* (Farnham – Burlington, VT: 2013); Fetvacı E., “Love in the Album of Ahmed I”, *Journal of Turkish Studies* 34, 2 (2010) 37–51; and Rizvi K. (ed.), *Affect, Emotion, and Subjectivity in Early Modern Muslim Empires: New Studies in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Art and Culture* (Leiden: 2017).

10 Welch A., “Worldly and Otherworldly Love in Safavi Painting”, in Hillenbrand R. (ed.), *Persian Paintings from the Mongols to the Qajars* (London: 2001) 302.

11 Komaroff L., “A Turkman Prisoner or Prisoner of Love?”, in Korangy A. – Sheffield D.J. (eds.), *No Tapping around Philology: A Festschrift in Honor of Wheeler McIntosh Thackston Jr.’s 70th Birthday* (Wiesbaden: 2014) 369–380.



FIGURE 7.1 "Prisoner of Love," album page (ca. second half of sixteenth century) fol. 2a.
M.2000.135 LACMA.

constrained by the stockade, was a metaphor for unrequited desire, the lover trapped in a painful relationship, with no hope of freedom or fulfillment.

Manuscripts, such as those devoted to the lives of saints and prophets, were also sites of experimentation and visual exegesis that at once affirmed their

pious intent while simultaneously asserting their role as conveyors of pleasure. Religious histories were popular during the Safavid period, such as the life of the eponymous founder of the Safaviyya order, Shaykh Safi al din Ishaq (d. 1335), the *Safwat al-safa* of Ibn Bazzaz Ardabili, and the stories of prophets, the *Qisas al-anbiya*.¹² Particular emphasis was also paid to illustrated *Falnama* (*Books of Omens*) and hagiographies of Shi'i imams, such as the *Tarikh-i 'aimayi masumîn* (*History of the Immaculate Imams*), which were elaborately illustrated manuscripts.¹³ The aesthetic and spiritual were merged in Sufi literature popularized during the Timurid period (1370–1507). Love was the focus of texts such as the *Sifat al-'ashiqîn* (*The Qualities of Lovers*) and *Dastur al-'ushshaq* (*The Confidant of Lovers*), both of which use aphorisms and mytho-historical examples that merge the 'mirror for princes' advice literature focusing on ethical codes of behavior with hagiographies to 'highlight love's status as the preeminent human emotion'.¹⁴ These books lay emphasis on the pain and suffering that are part of the experience of love, as a prelude to attaining the affection of God. Love, as Shahzad Bashir explains from the perspective of these texts, 'stirs up human beings in a way more potent than any other force that can act upon their bodies and minds'.¹⁵ That is, the intellectual and physical coalesced in ways that were transformative to the reader, the artist/writer, and the lover.

The focus of this essay is a set of images from a manuscript of Kamal al-din Gazargahi's *Majālis al-ushshāq* (*Assembly of Lovers*) that is now at the Topkapi Palace Museum, in Istanbul (henceforth H829).¹⁶ The text was composed around 1503 and dedicated to the Timurid prince, Husayn Bayqara and gained prominence later in the sixteenth century, when numerous illustrated manuscripts were produced in Safavid Iran, some for export to Ottoman Turkey,

12 See Milstein R., *Stories of the Prophets: Illustrated manuscripts of the Qisas al-anbiya* (Costa Mesa: 1999).

13 For both manuscripts, see, respectively, Farhad M. – Bagci S., *Falnama: The Book of Omens* (Washington, D.C.: 2009); and Canby S. – Thompson J. (eds.), *Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Safavid Iran, 1501–1576* (Milan: 2003).

14 Bashir S., *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam* (New York: 2011) 110.

15 Ibid. 110.

16 Kamal al-din Husayn Gazurgahi, *Majālis al-ushshāq*, ed. Ghulam Reza Tabatabai Majd (Tehran: 1996). There has been some debate about the authorship of the book, but scholars currently assume that it was written by Gazurgahi and dedicated to Sultan Husayn Bayqara. See Gandjei T., "Sultan Husayn Mirza Baykara", eds. P. Bearman – Th. Bianquis – C.E. Bosworth – E. van Donzel – W.P. Heinrichs. *Encyclopaedia of Islam Two*, Brill Online. Reference. Yale University. Accessed 10 June 2014.

where they were popular among Ottoman officials.¹⁷ The *Majālis al-ushshāq* is a rich and iconographically sophisticated text, which was very suitable for illustration. Through stories, aphorisms, and poetry, the author, Gazurgahi, sought to teach the reader the true principles of Sufi practice. Love, an emotion unlike any other, was nonetheless a resource through which truth could be achieved. Attaining that truth meant submitting oneself, with unyielding attention, to the beloved.

The *Majālis* centers on the subject of divine love, as manifested in the actions of humans (prophets, kings, and Sufi shaykhs). It comprises of 75 *majālis*, or gatherings, each vignette centered on a particular historical or mythological figure. The last *majlis* takes place in the court of the patron of the book, Husayn Bayqara. The book is distinguished by its emphasis on 'infusing history with the spirit of human love mediated by corporeal contact', and for narrating stories in which the protagonists have a 'special capacity for love'.¹⁸ The episodes are a collage of texts borrowed from previous writers and poets, recomposed by Gazurgahi. The protagonists in these stories are both the lover and the beloved, and at once the object of desire and the desiring subject. In the accompanying paintings, their humanity is not made apparent through increased naturalism, but rather encoded in gestures and glances. It is expressed through line, colour, and composition. These visual techniques shift emphasis away from what we may understand to be the esoteric knowledge embedded in the texts, towards a more visceral appreciation of the work of art as a material object.

H829 is not the earliest known illustrated manuscript of the *Majālis*, however, it does exemplify a group that gained popularity at the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁹ The codex is a bound manuscript, generous in size, opening with an elaborate *unvān* (opening page) followed by beautifully gilded double-page calligraphic pages. There are thirty paintings distributed throughout, executed with varying degrees of intricacy and skill. Themes, too, are diverse; some compositions center on intimate encounters in gardens, others are group scenes in bathhouses and Sufi lodges, full of vibrancy and action. What unites all the paintings is the subject of love between individuals, which means that the

17 This may also explain why the manuscript is now housed in Istanbul. Uluc L., "A New Illustrated Text: The *Majālis al-ushshaq*: 1550–1600", *Turkmen Governors, Shiraz Artisans and Ottoman Collectors: Sixteenth century Shiraz manuscripts* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 2006); 185.

18 Bashir, *Sufi Bodies* 131.

19 Thus, it is unusual but not entirely unique. There are more luxurious copies of the *Majālis* and also better preserved ones. It is clear that the manuscript has been repaired and some of the paintings retouched. Despite these factors, the paintings from H829 are intriguing and provide important insights into the religious and artistic culture of early Safavid Iran.

figures shown are always in relationship with one another—they gaze longingly at each other, fight, converse, and interact across a spectrum of activities.

The assemblies take place in gardens and palaces, but also in urban spaces such as the bazaar and in the *hamām*, or bathhouse. For example, Gazurgahi recounts the story of the famous mystic and poet, Sa'di Shirazi, and his encounter with a young man with whom he had fallen in love. The setting is a bathhouse where men gather, their semi-naked bodies on display [Fig. 7.2]. Young servants are also shown, attending to the bathhouse's clients. Communal scenes are repeated elsewhere in the manuscript, showing Sufi *sama'* in a dervish lodge or a class taking place in a madrasa courtyard. Bazaars are the backdrops of many of the stories related in the *Majālis* and allow the artists to depict social rituals and everyday life in the city. These scenes are particularly compelling as they correlate well with the literature of the time, especially the genre known as *shahrangiz*, in which romantic encounters take place within urban spaces.²⁰

The *Majālis* is a rich literary and visual document that requires detailed study. The focus of this essay, however, is the preface and four paintings that illustrate episodes related to the prophets Adam, Yusuf, and Muhammad.²¹ Like hagiographies of the time, Sufi theology and practice was contextualized within Islamic history, drawing upon religious figures as ideals of human perfection. In this manner, the three prophets discussed in the preface encapsulate Gazurgahi's goals and provide direction for how to approach the entire work. The last story discussed, that of the lovers, Layla and Majnun, is the fifty-eighth *majlis*, or assembly, and provides an important contrast and coda to the previous analyses.

Three issues form the basis of my inquiry into the *Majālis* and the representation of love in early modern Iran. First, is the manner in which the body is seen as an allegory of divine perfection, while at the same time a mortal reminder of the futility of striving to achieve it. That is to say, the body is both the locus of desire and a sign of its denial. Second is the interconnectedness of poetry and painting, and the inherent tension between them. That there is a close relationship between text and image in illustrated manuscripts is a truism, but the ways in which they compete and even negate each other are seldom considered. This leads to my third issue: how the paintings reveal tensions between the aesthetic and esoteric in the discourse on love, by functioning as

20 On the subject of *shahrangiz*, see Sharma S., "The City of Beauties in Indo-Persian Poetic Landscape", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 24.2 (2004) 73–81. Losensky, "Poetics and Eros" also dwells on the cityscape as a backdrop to romance.

21 The preface makes use of hadiths, *Qur'anic* verses, and poetry by well-known Sufis such as Qasim Anwar (d. 1433) and Jami (d. 1492) to set the stage for the whole text.

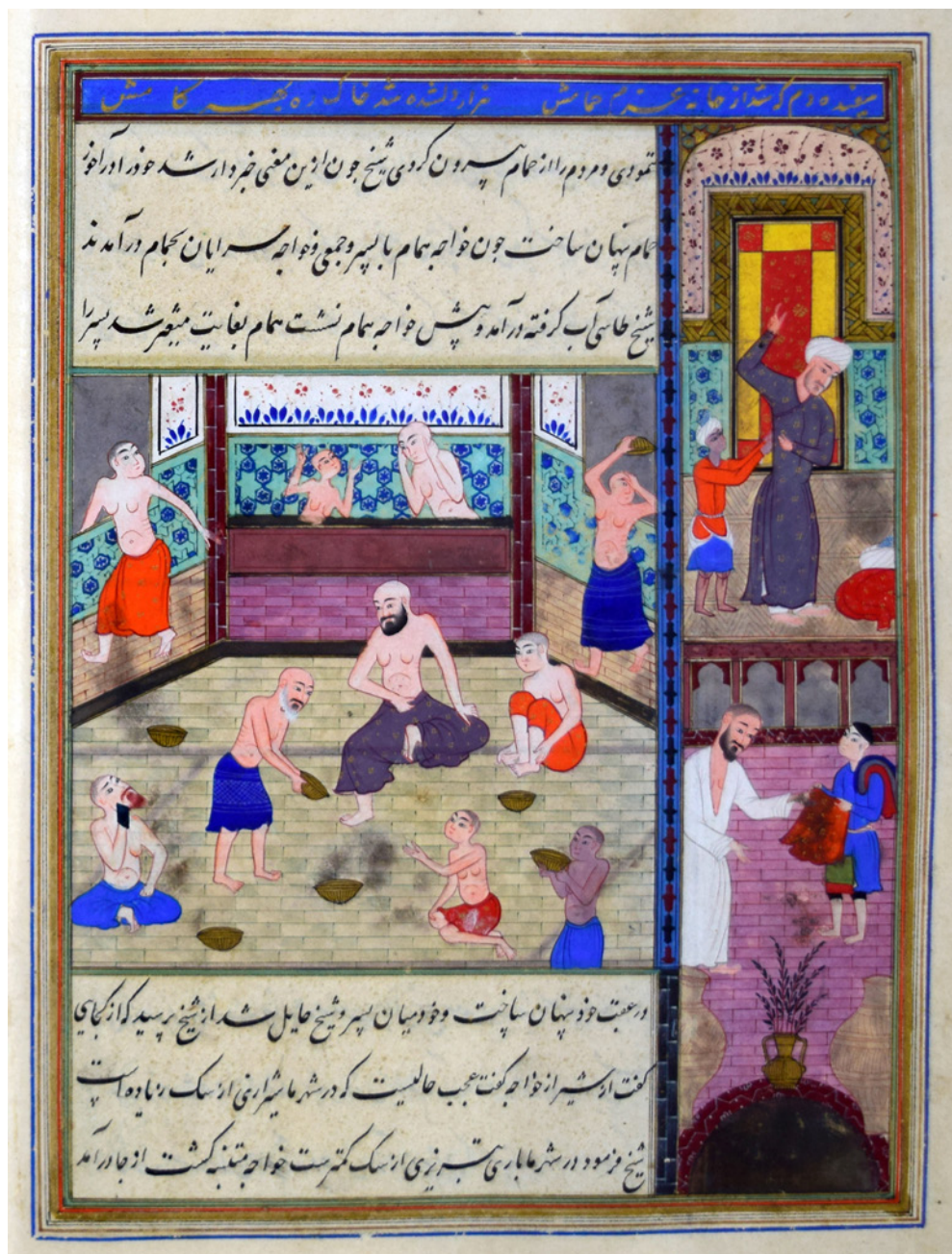


FIGURE 7.2 "Sa'di Shirazi at the bathhouse," *Majālis al-ushshāq* of Kamal al-din Gazurgahi (ca. 1580) H829, fol. 92b.

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a form of visual and intellectual distraction from the primary textual connotations. Together, these insights highlight the manner in which arts of the book took on a more materialist aesthetic in the early modern period, and its implications for Safavid visual culture.

Adam—Affirmation

In the *Qur'an*, Adam is God's beloved creation and God's viceroy. He is the one to whom God has taught the names of things, and it is to his offspring that He bequeathed the earth and all its bounty. Gazurgahi thus begins the *Majālis* with Adam, whose status is affirmed in the very second chapter of the *Qur'an*, in which the story of his creation and fall from grace is recounted. Upon molding Adam from clay, God orders the angels to prostrate themselves before him. The angels' devotion is depicted in the opening pages of H829, framed within a hexagonal border, with text blocks inserted at the top and bottom of the page [Fig. 7.3]. Adam's body occupies the center of the page, encircled by prostrating angels. The setting is verdant, the deep green accentuating both Adam and the angels. A purple outcrop behind them represents mountains and the horizon. The colours accentuate the differences between the brilliant angels, the flowering garden, and the primordial simplicity of Adam's naked body. He looks out directly at us, his eyes meeting ours. Adam's frontal nudity (his genitals modestly covered by his crossed hands) and direct gaze are unique to the *Majālis*.²² Just as his eyes lock with ours, his corporeality reminds us of our own mortal vulnerability; this mutual engagement is profound, evoking a fundamental connection between the text/image and reader/viewer.

The break-lines framing the painting describe how the angels entered the paradisiacal courtyard and encountered Adam.²³ Upon seeing his face, the manifestation (*sutūt-i tajjaliyāt*) of beauty, the angels' hearts are filled with

22 A very interesting corollary is to earlier anatomical and medico-mystical treatises, the *Tashrīh-i badan-i insān* of Mansur ibn Ilyas (ca. 1390), whose works were published in Shiraz, just like the *Majālis*. The connection is intriguing and requires further study. From what we know, the naked Adam occurs once outside the *Majālis*, in a contemporaneous Shiraz manuscript of Nizami's *Khamsa*, also studied by Lale Uluc; it is Topkapi Palace Library B, 146, folio 14v. Cited in Uluc L., "The *Majālis al-Ushshāq*: Written in Herat, copied in Shiraz, read in Istanbul," *EJOS* (Proceedings of the 11th International Congress on Turkish Art) IV, no. 52 (2001) 1–34; 6.

23 The 'break line' is a couplet or phrase that occurs before and sometimes after the painting, and helps the artist synchronize the image with the text; see Mehran F., "The Break-line



FIGURE 7.3 "Adam adored by the Angels," *Majālis al-ushshāq* of Kamal al-din Gazurgahi (ca. 1580) H829, fol. 6b.

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wonder and awe as they raise their voices in praise and bow their heads in devotion. The use of the term *sutūt-i tajjalyāt* is important, as it refers to Sufi ideals of divine revelation and power.²⁴ A Qur'anic phrase is inserted at the bottom of the page, which reads, 'Angels fell prostrate, all of them together, save Iblis'.²⁵ The disobedient angel can be seen beyond the outcrop, his blackened face transformed from that of an angel to the envious countenance of the Devil.²⁶ The text and image describe the moment when Iblis, an angel made of fire, refused to bow to Adam, an entity made of clay. The cause for this stand-off is Adam's humble corporeality, which has been presented to the angels as proof of God's love for man.

Adam was revered not only in Safavid literary circles, but also artistic ones. In the preface to a 1544 imperial album of art and calligraphy the author, Dust Muhammad, begins by invoking the *Qur'an* and placing the arts of depiction within the context of theology. Thus, God is the supreme creator, an artist, who gave form to Adam, his vicegerent on earth. In further justification of the arts, Dust Muhammad states that Adam is not only the father of mankind, but also 'the founder of the magnificent affair (writing and drawing) [...] who [first] fashioned a pen and wrote on tanned hide'.²⁷ Thus Adam is the first person to make use of the pen and, by extension, the primogenitor of poetry and painting; an appropriate subject with which to open an album preface. Given his significance to early modern artists and literati, he is also an appropriate subject in the preface of the *Majālis*, which is both a hagiography and a collection of poems and paintings.

Verse: The Link between Text and Image in the First Small Shahnama", in C. Melville (ed.), *Shahnama Studies* (Cambridge: 2006) 151–169.

- 24 *Tajjalyāt* appears in the *Qur'an* in the context of God's revelation to Moses: 'And when his Lord revealed (*tajalla*) (His) glory to the mountain He sent it crashing down. And Moses fell down senseless' (*Qur'an* 7:143). *Quran Explorer Online*, Yusuf Ali translation, <http://www.quranexplorer.com/quran/>. The Sufi interpretation of the term, especially its use in medieval Persian poetry, is considered in Schimmel A., *The Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: 1975) 298.
- 25 *Qur'an* 15:30. An Ottoman example in which the figure of Adam is revered within an imperial context may be found in Eryılmaz F.S., "From Adam to Süleyman: Visual Representations of Authority in 'Ārif's *Shāhnāma-yi Āl-i 'Osmān*", in Cipa H.E. – Fetvacı E. (eds.), *Writing History at the Ottoman Court: Editing the Past, Fashioning the Future* (Bloomington – Indianapolis: 2013) 103.
- 26 Iblis's transformation is recounted in another popular text from this period, the *Qisas al-anbiya* (*Tales of the Prophets*). For an English translation, see Thackston W.M., Jr., *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisa'i* (Boston: 1997).
- 27 Dost-Muhammad, "Preface to the Bahram Mirza Album", in *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art*, selected and trans. W.M. Thackston (Cambridge, MA: 1989) 338.

There is a well-known prophetic saying attributed to the prophet, Muhammad, that God made Adam in his own image, thereby installing in chosen men some of His own divinity.²⁸ This interface between the human and the divine was a constant theme in Sufi literature, and was visualized in intriguing ways in Safavid paintings. It is affirmed in the opening painting in H829, where Adam is revealed as the prototype for all humans. Adam's face is, for Sufi's, the epitome of beauty, 'the qibla of lovers' according to one Iranian mystic.²⁹ Further, Adam is a reflection of man himself; the viewer sees herself in the painting and, in Adam's eyes, her own humanity.³⁰ This reflexivity is an important aspect of H829, in which the lines between viewer and image are often blurred.

Yusuf and Zulaykha—Distraction

The next two images appear sequentially, and both refer to the Qur'anic story of Yusuf and Zulaykha, the wife of the ruler of Egypt (Potiphar). Yusuf, or Joseph in the Biblical tradition, was a central figure in medieval and early modern mystical literature, extolled for his beauty and purity. For early modern artists, too, Yusuf was a popular subject whether in illustrations of poetic anthologies or single-sheet paintings, providing the impetus for creating the beautiful image. For example, paintings and drawings of handsome young men, a popular subject in Safavid Iran, were often juxtaposed against poetic praise for Yusuf, conflating the well-known paragon of divine beauty with his earthly counterparts.³¹

There are several episodes from the life of this prophet that have been chosen over the centuries for retelling by theologians, poets, and artists. In the *Majālis*, Gazurgahi focuses on the story of Zulaykha's passionate desire for the young servant boy, whom she attempts to seduce, unsuccessfully [Fig. 7.4]. As described in the *Qur'an*, which devotes an entire chapter to Yusuf, Zulaykha invites Yusuf into the palace and locks the doors behind him, chasing him from room to room in vain.

28 See *Mukhtaṣar Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim = The Translation of the Meanings of Summarized Sahih Muslim: Arabic-English*, compiled by Zakiuddin Abdul-Azim Al-Mundhiri (Riyadh: 2000).

29 Ruzbihan Baqli (d. 1209), quoted in Schimmel, "Eros in Sufi Literature" 274.

30 Elite women were often the patrons of artists, and Safavid princesses were educated in the arts of writing and painting. The topic of gendered viewership requires more attention, but is beyond the scope of this essay.

31 An example is given in Welch, "Worldly and Otherworldly Love in Safavi Painting", plate 6.



FIGURE 7.4 "Yusuf and Zulaykha in the palace," *Majālis al-ushshāq* of Kamal al-din Gazurgahi (ca. 1580) H829, fol. 14b.

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And she, in whose house he was, asked of him an evil act. She bolted the doors and said: Come! He said: I seek refuge in Allah! Lo! he is my lord, who hath treated me honourably. [...] And they raced with one another to the door, and she tore his shirt from behind, and they met her lord and master at the door. (Joseph) said: She it was who asked of me an evil act. And a witness of her own folk testified: If his shirt is torn from before, then she speaketh truth and he is of the liars. And if his shirt is torn from behind, then she hath lied and he is of the truthful.³²

The first painting in the sequence shows the moment when Zulaykha grabs Yusuf's shirt as he attempts to escape from her.³³ The beloved and his pursuer have passed through the seven rooms in the palace—an allegory of the seven stages of heaven and the seven stages of mystical perfection—and arrived at the final one. Gazurgahi quotes extensively from the poetry of the fifteenth-century mystic, Jami (d. 1492), who gave the story of Yusuf and Zulaykha its classical form. Earlier renditions of the story, for example, by Sa'di Shirazi (d. 1292), remained popular in Timurid and Safavid court circles, but Jami's text is particularly suited for visual representation, with vivid descriptions of settings and emotions.³⁴ Picking parts of the poetry that focus on climactic scenes, Gazurgahi often adds his own poetic flourishes and verses from other poets such as Attar and Rumi.

On the beautifully decorated page facing the painting, the calligraphy is set in three rows of horizontal and parallel texts, the corners embellished in golden sprays. The text focuses on Yusuf's arrival in the seventh chamber of Zulaykha's palace; everywhere he looks—the ceiling, the walls, the carpet—images of the two lovers are painted or woven. The colourful palace has been built and decorated with sensual pictures in the hope of seducing Yusuf.³⁵

32 *Qur'an* 12: 23, 25.

33 For some interpreters the shirt is the primary subject of this episode. That it is torn from behind is seen as evidence that Yusuf was trying to escape from Zulaykha, thus providing proof of his innocence.

34 Arguably the best known painting of this episode comes from Sa'di's *Bustan* (*Garden*). It was produced in 1488 by the famous artist, Bihzad (National Library and Archives of Egypt, Cairo).

35 In Jami, *Yusuf and Zulaykha: A Poem*, trans. R.T. Griffith (London: 1882) 71–72, the palace is described as follows:

The painter there, to his orders true,
The forms of Zulaykha and Yusuf drew.
(*dar ān khāneh musawwir sākht har jāh,*
mithāl-i Yusuf va naqsh-i Zulaykha).
Like lovers both of one heart and mind,

'But how could Yusuf have been tempted to look at such imperfect pictures? He, who is Beauty personified, needs only one thing: a pure mirror'.³⁶ The seduction of images is powerless in the face of divinity, the reader may infer. The viewer is led to believe otherwise.

Although the section describing the palace is not included by Gazurgahi, it is clear from the illustration that the artists of the episode were well aware of Jami's poem. The painting illustrates the moment when Yusuf starts to run away from Zulaykha, having understood her intentions. The couplets above it read:

Of his lifted finger a key was made
Which every lock at a sign obeyed.
But Zulaykha caught him, with steps more fast
Or ever the furthest chamber he passed.
She clutched at his shirt as he fled amain,
And the coat from his shoulder was rent in twain.³⁷

The break lines describe the image, telling us that Zulaykha grasped Yusuf's *dāman* (shirt) and lamented her fate. We see him turn towards her, their eyes meeting. The deep orange of her tunic echoes her carnal passion. Yusuf, his blazing radiance depicted by the flames rising from his head, is set against the red background of the final threshold. Doors and windows frame the painting, allegories of the mystical journey the soul must undertake to escape mortal temptations. The carpet is covered in rosebuds, the walls painted with likenesses of Yusuf and Zulaykha in close embrace, fragmenting the surface and space of the painting into smaller vignettes. The decorative flourishes—the tiles cascading along the sides, the multiplicity of pattern—pull the eyes away from the main episode taking place within Zulaykha's palace. These small, seemingly insignificant details performatively function as visual and conceptual distractions: they divert the viewer's eyes away from the divine beauty of Yusuf and towards the materiality of the painted surface itself. That is to say, they focus attention not just on individual elements in the image, but on the substance of the painting, its colours and textures.

With the arm of each round the other entwined [...].
The rose sprays twined in close embrace.
Wherever the foot on the carpet stepped.
Two lovely roses together slept.

36 Schimmel A., *A Two Colored-Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry* (Chapel Hill: 2014) 66.

37 Jami, *Yusuf and Zulaikha* 78.

For mystics, beauty can serve as a distraction from the search for truth. Thus the image that follows is a testimony to its dangers, and once again, the material, physical body is central to this conceptualization. Following Zulaykha's attempt to seduce Yusuf, she is shamed by the women of Egypt as a fallen woman. To prove that her passion was unavoidable, she invites them all to her house, and they are served oranges and tea. Yusuf enters with the libations, and the women are awe-struck by his beauty [Fig. 7.5].³⁸ The painting's description begins at the bottom of the previous page and continues:

Like a bed of roses in full perfect bloom
 That secret treasure appeared in the room.
 The women of [Egypt] beheld him, and took
 From that garden of glory the rose of a look.
 One glance at his beauty over powered each soul
 And drew from their fingers the reins of control.
 Each lady would cut through the orange she held,
 As she gazed on that beauty unparalleled.
 [break line]
 One made a pen of her finger, to write
 On her soul his name [Yusuf's] who had ravished her sight.
 One scored a calendar's lines in red
 On the silver sheet of her palm outspread.³⁹

The painting captures the moment when Yusuf walks in through the door and stuns the women of Egypt with his beauty. He stands at the threshold, in the lower left hand corner of the painting. Zulaykha sits on the other side of the room's diagonal axis, her back upright, her eyes focused intently on Yusuf. All the other women turn toward Yusuf, their knives held in their hands. Their shock at his beauty is apparent: one woman swoons; another grabs at her chest in a gesture of anguish and despair. The center of the page is left empty, although the decorative scheme is as complex as that in the previous painting.

38 *Qu'ran* 12: 31.

39 Jami, *Yusuf and Zulaikha* 85. In the published text of the *Majālis*, this portion of Jami's poem is not included. Texts such as these were unstable, that is, the calligrapher or compiler of a particular manuscript could take liberties with what verses were included and which ones were omitted. More importantly for our purposes, there is a conscious awareness of which verses are more conducive to visual representation/juxtaposition. Thus, although Gazurgahi himself does not include this section of Jami's poem in his *Majālis*, the compiler of H829 does.



FIGURE 7.5 "Yusuf and the women of Egypt," *Majālis al-ushshāq* of Kamal al-din Gazurgahi (ca. 1580) H829, fol. 16b.

TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM, ISTANBUL.

The carpet decorated with roses, the intricate geometric tiles, and floral wall paintings again divert our attention from the main story.

Yet the colours and gestures also draw the viewer into the narrative. The pulsing orange of Zulaykha's robe and the deep red of Yusuf's pull the eye diagonally across the page.⁴⁰ The colours anticipate the blood spilled by the distracted women. The poet describes the blood collecting in their hands, blending with the juice of the oranges like the union of two lovers. The knives whittle the fingers into a pen; the blood becomes the ink, which inscribes the story of love. The stunned women inadvertently fashion their fingers into pens, and become the scribes to the unfolding drama. The materiality of the body and the painted surface are evoked here. The bodily experience of pain and wonder is not unlike the inscription of the pen on the page. Jami's poetry, like the painting, makes evident the power of the pen and its role in documenting the story of Yusuf and Zulaykha. Together, words and images also evince their own authority through their primary tool, the pen.

The reflexivity of words and images, of reading and seeing, the resonance between the hands holding the book and those writing it, is central to the manner in which manuscripts such as these conveyed meaning. Indeed, the artist suggests as much by incorporating the anonymous reader into the painting. In an alcove directly above Yusuf sits a solitary woman, an open book in her right hand. Is she the reader of this book, or the narrator of the story? Is she viewing the scene unfolding below her, or imagining it through Gazurgahi's and Jami's words? Her visual counterpart, who appears at the bottom of the page, displays not rapt concentration but dramatic disarray. She wears the same yellow tunic and white headdress and faces the woman in the balcony, even as she falls backwards, awestruck by Yusuf's beauty. The doubling serves to add a temporal dimension to the painting: it is as if the woman from the balcony had stepped into the women's gathering, only to find herself in the presence of Yusuf. Similarly, the painting inserts the viewer/reader into the unfolding narrative. What had been an act of quiet reading now becomes an awe-inspiring experience, setting her senses awry. The image collapses the boundary between seeing the painting and experiencing the story; the hands of the artist here merge with those of the reader holding the manuscript, their bodies momentarily becoming one. Through this overlay, the artist creates empathy between himself and his viewer/reader.

40 The same colour scheme, Yusuf in red, Zulaykha in bright orange, is also in the British Library *Majālis* (1.O. ISLAMIC 138), although the scene is outdoors in a garden. There is clearly a codification of design and colour taking place.

The use of colour in the Yusuf sequence of paintings is significant. Red, in particular, signals identity (Yusuf's robe) and materiality (the blood on the women's hands); it is at once a pigment, and it represents an emotion—love. The early sixteenth-century Safavid courtier, Sadiqi Beg Afshar, in his *Canons of Painting*—a detailed discourse on the making and application of paint—wrote extensively about the use of colour. In considering combinations of colours, he instructs the artists that ‘when you wish to mix colours, you will need clean and pure pigments. Whether you make a little or a lot, mix two colours, the lover and the beloved’.⁴¹ The Sufi undertones are undeniable, but so too are the realities of pigments' substance, their inherent physicality. Thus the practice of painting was itself seen as an act of match-making, bringing together pigments and colours in ways that are sensual and material.

Colour in Safavid art may be viewed through the lens of Sufism, but it also moves beyond its esoteric conceptualization. Ann Dunlop writes in the context of Italian Renaissance art that colour ‘elides the distinction between the materiality of the work and the fiction put forward by it, and is easily made into an allegory of the chasm between life and language, speech and subjectivity’.⁴² While the manner in which colour is made and applied in Safavid art is different from that in Italy, thinking of the mutability of meaning and materiality through the use of colour can certainly be applied to Persian paintings. The issues of narrative and subjectivity that Dunlop raises are especially relevant in the context of devotional imagery, where images were meant to function in several registers. Contemplating the divine body, be it that of Adam or Yusuf, was to consider the beauty of God. Yet the paintings also drew attention away

41 Sadiqi Beg Afshar, quoted in Gruber C., “The Rose of the Prophet: Floral Metaphors in Late Ottoman Devotional Art”, in Roxburgh D. (ed.), *Envisioning Islamic Art and Architecture: Essays in Honor of Renata Holod* (Leiden: 2014) 227–254, esp. 239. In this essay, Gruber also analyzes the use of colour—in particular, pink and red—within the context of Sufi literature and painting in praise of Muhammad. Walter S. Melion raises the issue of colour as an instrument of visual contemplation in “Introduction: Meditative Image and the Psychology of the Soul”, in Falkenburg R.L. – Melion W.S. – Richardson T.M. (eds.) *Image and Imagination of the Religious Self in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Turnhout: 2007) 1–36, esp. 12.

42 Dunlop A., “Drawing Blood”, *RES: Journal of Anthropology and Aesthetics* 63/64 (2013) 70–79, esp. 75. Another useful comparison is provided in Didi-Hubermann G., *Fra Angelico: Dissemblance and Figuration* (Chicago: 1995), esp. the “Introduction” (1–11) and “Incorporation: In the Bosom of Color” (217–235). I am grateful to Michael Zell for this reference.

from that contemplation, and towards the viewer's own pleasure and subjectivity, bringing the divine into the realm of human experience.⁴³

Muhammad—Attention

In the Islamic tradition no figure represents the conflation of divinity with humanity better than Muhammad, whom Muslims believe to be the final revealed prophet and the epitome of mortal perfection. The last image in the preface of H829 refers to a *ḥadīth* (prophetic tradition) in which the angel Gabriel appears to the prophet in the form of one of his companions, Dihyah al-Kalbi, a wealthy merchant who was known for his extraordinary handsomeness.⁴⁴ There are several historical and legendary stories about the life of Muhammad, but Gazurgahi chooses a very interesting (and somewhat obscure) one that locates the prophet within the language of esoteric love. Sufi exegesis focuses on Muhammad's perfection and purity of spirit; he is himself the subject of admiration and devotion. However, in the story regarding Dihyah, the focus shifts ever so slightly away from the perfect man, and towards the beloved.

If Adam is the archetype of humanity, Muhammad is its unattainable ideal [Fig. 7.6]. The prophet of Islam is referred to as the *insān-i kāmīl* (the perfect human), a designation that pulls him out of the realm of the everyday. Thus it is not surprising that the artists of the *Majālis* depict Muhammad in a manner that masks any trace of corporeality; his face is subsumed by a fiery radiance and every inch of his body is draped and covered in fabric. His posture imitates Adam's only in so far as he faces us; yet instead of the naked vulnerability of Adam, here we see no face or body. The impression is one not of confrontation, but rather of stillness and control. Muhammad's corporeality is beyond recognition and, in this case, beside the point. Time stands still, and the scattered glances of the figures encircling Muhammad exaggerate his stillness.

43 It would be useful to compare the Incarnation in the Christian tradition with the ways in which Islamic theologians resolve the tension between divinity and humanity. In the Qur'an and traditions, Muhammad and the prophets are viewed as humans; conduits for spiritual enlightenment, but themselves not divine. However, several Sufi poets and philosophers blurred the distinction, imbuing holy figures with esoteric knowledge and power, thereby accentuating the tension rather than resolving it.

44 Lammens H. – Pellat Ch., "Dihya", in Bearman P. – Bianquis Th. – Bosworth C.E. – Donzel E. van – Heinrichs W.P. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam Two*, Brill Online. Reference. Yale University. Accessed on 4 June 2016.



FIGURE 7.6 "Muhammad and Dihya," *Majālis al-ushshāq of Kamal al-din Gazurgahi* (ca. 1580) H829, fol. 19a.

TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM, ISTANBUL.

Dihya is represented in the painting by the young, fresh-faced boy entering the room on the left. He is dressed in red (now established as an important signifier of love), and stands apart from the circle of men seated before Muhammad. Gazurgahi tells the story of how the divine spirit entered the figure (*ṣurat*) of Dihya al-Kalbi, causing quietness to descend upon him. Gazurgahi refers to a famous hadith, which is the break-line to the painting: 'I have a time with God that is not available for kings or prophets', which Sufi exegetes understand to refer to Muhammad's night journey through the heavens, in order to be presented to God.⁴⁵ The word *waqt*, or 'time', refers to the moment when time itself is subverted, and Muhammad transcends his material limitations; he enters a space that is not accessible to angels, kings, or prophets. The divine union is, like Muhammad's perfection, an aspiration for the mystic, and seldom achieved. Although Dihyah is the object of beauty here, the focus of this image is the luminous presence of Muhammad. He is at the center of the page, yet his body is invisible; his attention is elsewhere, even as the image requires our focus all the more. The dichotomy between the attention that is diverted within the image and that which is bestowed upon it by the viewer points to the complex modes of viewing early Safavid painting, which was never far removed from the text within which it was imbedded or to which it responded. The reader/viewer was thus always in a state of mental vacillation, between remembering, seeing, and reading.

Majnun—Renunciation

Through adoration of the material body of Adam, through the passionate love of Zulaykha for Yusuf, and through the distracted yearning of the women of Egypt, we are made aware that love can exist as both esoteric and carnal desire. It is, however, destabilized in the last image in the series, that of Muhammad, where transcendent experience is given precedence over bodily expression. The preface of the *Majālis* sets the stage for the rest of the book, which consists of stories of love between men, women, dervishes, and kings. In the following stories and paintings the material and spiritual dimensions of love and art-making come to the fore. Social and even religious boundaries are transgressed, journeys undertaken, and lives lost, all in the pursuit of spiritual love.

45 In Arabic, *lī ma Allah waqt lā sanī fī malik maqrab lā nabī mursil*.

As mentioned earlier, these vignettes echo Sufi themes of temptation, loss, and union. Yet, the milieu within which Gazurgahi wrote was also one in which artists and writers were exploring themes of selfhood and individuality. Similarly, the everyday preoccupied them as much as the esoteric; the quotidian was as appropriate a subject for painting as was the imperial or religious. Tales of young lovers provided ample opportunity to investigate the spectrum of human emotions. One of the most popular and well-known stories of the early modern period is that of Layla and Qays ibn al-Mulawwah, which is the fifty-eighth assembly described in the *Majālis al-ushshāq*.⁴⁶ Well before gaining fame in Persian through the *Khamsa* (*Quintet*) of the Iranian poet, Nizami Ganjavi (d. ca. 1209), the legend of the two star-crossed lovers was popular in the Arabic tradition. Renditions of the story were also offered by later poets, most notably Jami. Gazurgahi moves back and forth in his version between the poetry of Nizami and Jami, while sometimes inserting his own couplets.

Layla and Qays met as children in school, where they both fell intensely in love with each other. However, whereas Layla's love was discrete, Qay's was intoxicating to the extent of driving him crazy (hence his nickname, Majnun, the 'possessed'). Although the lovers had become close in childhood, Majnun's insanity made him an unsuitable match, and Layla was married off to another man. Heartbroken, Majnun never recovered, and even when Layla came to him, his madness prevented their love from being consummated. He forsook everything to wander the deserts of Arabia writing love songs to his beloved. Sufi poets and commentators understood Majnun's passion to represent the soul's longing for divine union, and the tribulations it must endure to achieve it. Mortification of the spirit and denial of the body were necessary markers of Majnun's devotion, even if the poetry and paintings documenting it remain among the most captivating works of art. What they capture is not just the exterior manifestation of Majnun's suffering, but his 'interior journey' in search of truth and unity.⁴⁷

Layla and Majnun were the epitome of the idealistic lovers, and their story greatly fascinated early modern artists [Fig. 7.7]. Timurid and Safavid illustrations depict several episodes, from their chaste first encounter to Majnun's

46 There are several scholarly articles on the historic, literary, and cultural significance of the Layla and Majnun story, among them Schimmel, *Two-Colored Brocade* 131–133; and Nicholson R.A., "Madjūn", in Houtsma M.Th. – Arnold T.W. – Basset R. – R. Hartmann (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam Two*, Brill Online. Reference. Yale University. Accessed 6 October, 2015.

47 Schimmel, *Mystical Dimension of Islam* 392, discusses the mystical undertones of the story.



FIGURE 7.7 “Majnun and Layla embracing surrounded by Wild Animals,” Khamsa of Amir Khusraw of Delhi (ca. sixteenth century), fol. 70. HARVARD ART MUSEUMS/ARTHUR M. SACKLER MUSEUM, GIFT OF JOHN GOELET.

feverish wanderings in the desert and among wild beasts, his figure changing from that of an ardent lover to that of an emaciated dervish. The artists of the *Majālis* have chosen two episodes for illustration; the first concerns the school-yard where the lovers first met; the second, Majnun's pilgrimage to the Ka'ba in Mecca [Figs. 7.8 & 7.9].⁴⁸

The latter painting shows the interior courtyard of the Great Mosque, with its arcaded galleries and minarets. The Ka'ba, covered in black cloth, occupies the central foreground, while a rocky outcrop at the top of the page, with two men seated on it, represents the mountainous landscape beyond the mosque. Diverse groups of pilgrims have gathered in the courtyard, from merchants and mendicants to pilgrims dressed in the ritual clothing of those performing the annual Haj pilgrimage.⁴⁹ Majnun wears a blue cloth wrapped around his waist, his emaciated body on full display. His left hand gestures towards the Ka'ba as he turns to look back at his father, an elderly man standing behind him.

In Nizami's rendition, quoted here by Gazurgahi, Majnun's father had asked Layla's family for her hand in marriage for his son, but was rebuffed. In despair and seeing his son's condition rapidly deteriorating, the father decided that he and his son must make the pilgrimage in hopes of finding a cure for Majnun's madness. The painting focuses on their arrival at the sacred precinct, where the father advises his son to pray to God and ask for relief from his suffering. The text on the page reads:

The father held his son's hand gently as they stood in the shadow of the Ka'ba. He said, 'My son, this is the place where all plays come to an end, hurry to find your remedy. In the shadow of the Ka'ba, pray for relief from the shadow of your grief. Ask the master of this holy site for a cure. Pray to him, [breakline]: "Dear Lord, save me from this foolishness (vanity). Give me success in this redemption"'.

48 The image of Majnun at the Ka'ba was widespread in the visual culture of sixteenth-century Iran, travelling from illustrations of Nizami's *Khamse* to Firdawsi's *Shahnama*, although in the latter the protagonist was no longer Arab Majnun, but the Greek hero, Alexander. See Simpson M. S., "From Tourist to Pilgrim: Iskandar at the Ka'ba in Illustrated *Shahnama* Manuscripts", *Iranian Studies* 43.1 (2010) 127–146.

49 During the Haj pilgrimage, men and women are required to wear the ritual white robes marking them as pilgrims.



FIGURE 7.8 "Layla and Majnun in the School Yard," *Majālis al-ushshāq* of Kamal al-din Gazurgahi (ca. 1580) H829, fol. 152a.

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FIGURE 7.9 "Majnun at the Ka'ba", Majālis al-ushshāq of Kamal al-din Gazurgahi (ca. 1580) H829, fol. 154b.

TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM, ISTANBUL.



FIGURE 7.10
*"Majnun at the Ka'ba"; Majālis
 al-ushshāq of Kamāl al-dīn
 Gazurgahī (ca. 1580) H829, fol. 154b.
 Detail.*
 TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM,
 ISTANBUL.

Nizami tells us that Majnun first wept and then laughed defiantly at his father's words. He leapt forward and started to beat against the door of the Ka'ba, crying, 'May I always be love's slave!'⁵⁰

Majnun is surrounded by tribesmen and other pilgrims, yet he stands out in his nakedness and frailty. A closer look reveals a body covered with self-inflicted scars, his arms marked by the burns typical of renunciant Sufis. More striking is the tattoo above Majnun's heart, which is inscribed with the name of his beloved, Layla [Fig. 7.10]. It reminds us of Sa'eb's poem that is the epigraph to this essay, in which the author compares the breast to a notebook upon which the names of lovers are inscribed, in ink and blood. The artists of this image, like the poet Sa'eb, use ink as evidence of Majnun's devotion, filling his breast with the name Layla.

In the cultural milieu of early modern Iran, Majnun exemplified the anti-nomian dervishes whose antisocial and masochistic behavior simultaneously alienated and elevated them. Such men lived in cemeteries, covered themselves in ash, and renounced worldly comforts. They marked their bodies with tattoos and pierced them with needles; they starved and immolated themselves in order to attain their goal of spiritual purity. The endurance of physical pain made evident their disregard for the body and its human limitations.⁵¹ Men

50 The poem is translated in Nizami, *The Story of Layla and Majnun*, trans. R. Gelpke (New York: 1966; reprint ed., New York: 1997).

51 See Karamustafa A., *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic later Middle Period, 1200–1550* (Salt Lake City: 1994).

such as these called themselves the lovers of God, removing themselves from the day to day in order to spend their time in devotion and prayer.

From the fifteenth century onwards renditions of mystics and dervishes populate albums and illustrations from Turkey to India. A painting in a *Majālis al-ushshāq* from the turn of seventeenth century depicts scenes of wandering holy men that would have been familiar to early modern viewers [Fig. 7.11].⁵² The story, of Shaykh Fakhr al din Iraqi and his companions, shows the dervishes with typical accoutrements of ragged clothing and begging bowls. Their beards and hair are in disarray, and their bodies are scarred with burn marks (*dāgh*). Fakhr al-din is in the center reciting from a book while accepting alms from the bystanders. On his chest is a tattoo, *Yā, 'Alī* ('Oh, 'Ali'), evoking the name of 'Ali, the prophet's son-in-law and cousin, who was a popular figure for veneration by Sufis and Shi'is alike. A similar painting of a young beggar is in a beautifully decorated album page from the late sixteenth century [Fig. 7.12]. He, too, is dressed in rags, his begging bowl and staff placed in front of him. His eyes are cast downward as he kneels against a floral background. His chest, like that of Fakhr al-din, is marked with the tattoo *Yā, 'Alī*, and he has burn marks on his arms. Around the painting, poetic verses are arranged in white cartouches against a gold background. Unlike the dervishes in these paintings, Majnun has inscribed the name not of 'Ali or Allah, but of Layla. The contrast between the Ka'ba—the most holy space for Muslims—and Majnun's devotion not to God but to a woman is important. Indeed the artist expects you to recognize this tension; he also wants you to note the choice he has made in writing the name of a beautiful young woman on Majnun's breast, not that of God or his prophets.

Majnun's presence at the Ka'ba is a challenge to normative ideas of love and devotion. Nizami places him there to call into question religious orthodoxy and the restrictive apparatus of ritual performance. The true believer, in a Sufi ideation, had little use for such conventionality; rather, his Ka'ba was an esoteric concept, held within his heart. The artists of the painting have taken the critique a step further, pointing to the displaced materiality of love. In contrast to the golden Qur'anic phrase woven into the drapery of the Ka'ba, 'and whosoever enters it is safe', we see a simple inscription, 'Layla', on Majnun's chest.⁵³ Layla's name and its blood red rendition highlight the human dimension of this story and its intrinsic relationship to the body. Love of this nature causes pain and is deeply felt; it drives the lover insane and damages his body.

52 "Shaykh Fakhr al-din Iraqi (d. around 1289) and his Wandering Dervishes Beg for Alms in Front of a Convent," [Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin], published in *The Friend of God: The Picture World of Persian Luxury Calligraphy from the 1600s* (Berlin: 2005) 76.

53 The verses referenced here are from *Qur'an* 3:96–97.



FIGURE 7.11 "Shaykh Fakhr al din Iraqi and the Dervishes," Majālis al-ushshāq of Kamal al-din Gazurgahi (ca. 1580).

MUSEUM FÜR ISLAMISCHE KUNST, STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN. PHOTOGRAPHER: INGRID GESKE.



FIGURE 7.12 "Young Dervish," late 16th century. After Welch A., "Worldly and Otherworldly Love in Savafi Painting", in Hillenbrand R. (ed.), *Persian Paintings from the Mongols to the Qajars* (London: 2001).
TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM.

Yet in Majnun's fragility there is beauty and humanity. The delicate brushwork and calligraphy emphasize the disjunctions between the visual pleasure of the image and the evocation of pain in the narrative.

When Majnun marks his body with the name of Layla not Allah, it is not just the displacement of alphabets that has taken place, but that of charismatic authority. That dervishes and lovers, such as those in the *Majālis*, become the subjects of early modern Persian art points to a few important issues: first, the manner in which religio-mystical traditions take on a decidedly materialist form; which is to say that the quotidian and the carnal become primary concerns to artists and poets, who aim to produce works that are at once fresh (*tāza*) and innovative.⁵⁴ This is not to suggest that religion becomes secondary—on the contrary, Shi'ism and some forms of Sufism defined Safavid political life. But the manner in which devotion was made manifest does change in profoundly important ways.

The second point has to do with the body, which becomes the locus of both divine and human longing. This is made evident by the manner in which it becomes the primary subject in several of these images, as a conduit of pain and suffering as well as of emotions such as love and wonder. Love is no longer conceived as an esoteric ambition, but instead expressed as physical desire, a shift evident in the erotic love poetry that also became popular at this time. The materiality of the painted surface, too, takes on urgency, competing with the written word in the creation of affective responses. Indeed, the tectonics of painting were called upon to add emotional depth to the image, through the use of colour, composition, and citation in unprecedented ways.

Conclusion

The subject of love, a theme so well developed in the literary arts of medieval Persianate cultures, was visualized in the early modern arts of the book in unprecedented ways. In this process, the conceptualization of love was also altered, from an idealized act of devotion to a physical, human, attribute that is literally inscribed on the body and made apparent in the act of painting. Single-page paintings would follow, depicting homo- and hetero-erotic scenes of lovers in intimate scenes [Fig. 7.13]. Burning and tattooing the lover's body visually externalized the painful pleasure of 'belonging' to another person and was documented in paintings and drawings.

54 On new poetic forms emerging at this time, see Kinra R., "Fresh Words for a Fresh World: *Tāza-Gū't* and the Poetics of Newness in Early Modern Indo-Persian Poetry", *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory* 3.2 (2007) 125–149.



FIGURE 7.13 “Young lovers burning marks on each other,” early 17th century.
COLLECTION OF PRINCE SADR AL-DIN AGA KHAN, IR. M. 89.

Lives of the prophets and Shi'i imams were merged with those of Sufi shaykhs and mythical lovers in treatises such as the *Majālis al-ushshāq*. The love of God that Gazurgahi explores in his text was overlaid with the charismatic authority deployed by Safavid rulers in the rituals of devotion they enacted and also manifest in the cultural productions of their courtly milieu. This overlay of worldly and esoteric themes may be among the reasons that the text became so popular during the sixteenth century. Spiritual authority was made incarnate in the body of the Shah, just as divine love was personified by human subjects, such as Majnun. The tension between the texts and images was a powerful one; manuscripts such as the *Majālis* are fraught with conflicting affect, where the pleasure of seeing may distract from the practice of comprehending. The resultant disorientation, not unlike the feeling of being in love, was itself a welcome displacement, of thoughts and emotions.

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The Painting Looks Back: Reciprocal Desire in the Seventeenth Century

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The ancients attributed the invention of painting to an act of love: Butades's daughter tracing her lover's shadow on a wall, according to Pliny.¹ Likewise, the greatest works were deemed to spring from the artist's infatuation with his model, from Apelles and Campaspe to Raphael and his Fornarina.² Ever since Ovid's *Ars amatoria*, the art of love had been seen as a discipline more refined than the art of painting, which the Romans did not discuss with similar sophistication. By the late sixteenth century, however, courtiers' literature had become a conduit between poetic and artistic endeavours, ensuring that the nuanced vocabulary of amorous talk affected the theory of painting.³ In Italian and Dutch sources, both the making and the appreciation of art were described in terms of the lover's interest in a woman: Dame Pictura. She was a *vrijster met vele vrijers*: a lady with a host of swains, in the words of the artists' biographer Cornelis de Bie.⁴ True artists came to their trade by falling helplessly in love

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- 1 Bie Cornelis de, *Het gulden cabinet van de edel vry schilderconst* (Antwerp, Meyssens van Monfort: 1661) 23.
- 2 Hoogstraten Samuel van, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderconst* (Rotterdam, Van Hoogstraten: 1678) 291: 'Urbijn, toen hy verliefte was; Venus deede hem Venus op het schoonst ten toon brengen [...] Het geen onmogelijk schijnt kan de liefde uitvoeren, want de geesten zijn wakkerst in verliefde zinnen'. Cf. Lucas de Heere's admiration for Hugo van der Goes, as cited in Mander Karel van, "Het leven der doorluchtighe Nederlandsche en Hoogduytsche schilders", in idem, *Het schilderboek* (Haarlem, Paschier van Wesbusch: 1604), fols. 203v–204r. For more examples, see Sluijter E.J., *Seductress of Sight: Studies in Dutch Art of the Golden Age* (Zwolle: 2000) 141–144.
- 3 The influence of courtier's manuals on artistic theory merits additional study. For instance, Baldassare Castiglione's treatise, which was translated into Dutch partly in 1639 and entirely in 1662 and 1675, is referenced in Mander Karel van, "Den grondt der edel-vry schilderconst", in *Het schilderboek* IV 37, fol. 14v; and Junius Franciscus, *De schilderconst der oude* (Middelburg, Zacharias Roman: 1641) vi; the painter Samuel van Hoogstraten made a full-fledged translation of a similar courtier's manual (*Den eerlyken jongeling*, 1657).
- 4 De Bie, *Cabinet* 68 ff, 207: '[V]rijster met veel vrijers'. Cf. Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight* 131–134.

with her.⁵ As for their public, they were even more explicitly called the 'lovers' of painting or, in Dutch, *liefhebbers*, guarded 'jealously' by their mistress.⁶

In this essay, I would like to explore to what extent discussions about the lifelikeness of images borrowed from the discourse of love. Early modern art theory often emphasizes the essentially physical reaction to which painting may give rise. The viewer is described as not just losing the ability to speak or move, but even perspiring, crying out, or desiring to embrace the depicted figures.⁷ This reaction is not dissimilar to the effect of the beloved upon the lover, as described in amorous poetry.

To begin with that most explicit story about an artist in love with art: Pygmalion and Galatea [Fig. 8.1]. Giorgio Vasari describes a painting attributed to Bronzino, now in the Uffizi, as 'Pygmalion praying to Venus in order that his statue, receiving the spirit, becomes alive and made of [...] flesh and bones'.⁸ The picture shows how the sculptor sacrifices an animal to the Goddess of Love, in order to fulfill his desire to turn cold stone into pulsating flesh. The flames in the background rhyme with Ovid's original description of 'a fire ignite[d] in [Pygmalion's] breast for the simulated body'.⁹ Galatea, however, averts her eyes and looks straight out of the image—at us. This mutual gaze, which calls to mind the triangular relation among artist, artwork, and *viewer*, merits additional analysis.

As the present volume illustrates, early modern philosophy often studied love as a function of sight, and sight as a function of love. This manner of thinking responded to the basic Neo-Platonic notion that beauty was identical to truth, and that the appreciation of physical bodies could inspire more abstract

5 It is necessary that the painter 'in de aerdicheden der bevallijke natuur uit te beelden, verlief is', and 'op de ziele der konst als verslingert is', according to Van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding* 12; conversely, cf. *ibid.*, 302: good paintings make 't gezicht in haere behaeglijkheden [...] verlieven'.

6 Van Mander, "Het leven" fol. 143v: 'De Schilder-const is genoech gelijk een schoon Vrouwe, die over haer Liefhebbers oft naevolgers seer jeloers is'. Cf. Van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding* 290–291: the work of art is expected to 'in het eerste opslach geheel tot zich [te] trekken', 'machtig genoeg [...] om de konstliefdige geesten tot zich te trekken, uit d'alderafgelegenste gewesten'.

7 Cf. Weststeijn T., *The Visible World: Samuel van Hoogstraten's Art Theory and the Legitimation of Painting in the Dutch Golden Age* (Amsterdam: 2008) 154–160.

8 Vasari Giorgio, *Le vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori italiani, da Cimabue insino a' tempi nostri* (Florence, Giunti: 1568) III 488: '[D]ipinse Bronzino Pigmalione, che fa orazione a Venere, perche la sua statua ricevendo lo spirito s'aviva, e divenga [...] di carne, e d'ossa'.

9 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.252–253: '[M]iratur et haurit/pectore Pygmalion simulati corpus ignes'.



FIGURE 8.1 *Bronzino (attributed to), Pygmalion and Galatea, ca. 1529–1539. Tempera on wood, 81 × 64 cm. Florence, Uffizi.*

IMAGE COLLECTION INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM.

values. Authors such as Marsilio Ficino described seeing literally as a transfer of spiritual qualities. Vision was, accordingly, supposed to affect both the seer and the seen, in what historians of science call 'action at a distance'.¹⁰

In regard to this theme, one should first note that pre-modern theories of vision do not generally interpret ocular rays as a movement of light particles or waves, but rather as the means of transport of 'vital spirits'. One (Aristotelian) theory held that these spirits move from object to viewer, but another (Platonic) view emphasized their movement from viewer to object. Treatises on art are marked by ambivalence as to these notions of extramission and intromission.¹¹ Rather than opting for one stance or the other, it seems that seventeenth-century theories of painting could conceive of the artistic experience as a two-way transfer of qualities *from* and *to* the eye. It is in this sense that art can be similar to love. In short, the viewer is supposed to affect the work of art, by conferring on the painted figures their lifelikeness through his or her imagination. But the artwork is also expected to affect the viewer, sometimes with consequences no less fateful than those of love. This presumed cross-over of qualities inspires my analysis of how the painting looks back at the viewer.

Love's Images

A cautionary remark concerns the profoundly un-doctrinaire nature of early modern art theory: clear-cut discussions of optical and philosophical themes are rare, and the artworks that provide visual commentary on these theories are even more ambiguous. Yet, one leitmotif seems to have been the ideas of Ficino, whose *El libro dell'amore* (1475) had been reprinted thirty times by 1647. Gianlorenzo Bernini owned his writings, which were also quoted by Rembrandt's pupil Samuel van Hoogstraten.¹² Other artists may have consulted

10 Hub B., "Material Gazes and Flying Images in Marsilio Ficino and Michelangelo", in Göttler C. – Neuber W. (eds.), *Spirits Unseen: The Representation of Subtle Bodies in Early Modern European Culture*, Intersections 9 (Leiden: 2007) 92–119.

11 See also Weststeijn T., "Seeing and the Transfer of Spirits in Early Modern Art Theory", in Carman C. – Hendrix J. (eds.), *Renaissance Theories of Vision* (London: 2010) 149–170; and idem, "Painting's Enchanting Poison: Artistic Efficacy and the Transfer of Spirits", in Göttler C. – Neuber W. (eds.), *Spirits Unseen: The Representation of Subtle Bodies in Early Modern European Culture*, Intersections 9 (Leiden: 2007), 141–78.

12 Doel M.J.E. van den, *Ficino en het voorstellingsvermogen; 'phantasia' en 'imaginatio' in kunst en theorie van de Renaissance* (Amsterdam: 2008) 66; McPhee S., "Bernini's Books", *The Burlington Magazine* 142 (2000) 442–448, 442; and Van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding* 5.



FIGURE 8.2 'Amoris fructus atque premium sola quandoque cogitatio est', Otto Vaenius, *Amorum emblemata* (Antwerp 1608) 192.

IMAGE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.

courtiers' literature and emblem books that borrowed from the same theory of love.¹³

Take, for instance, two works from emblematic literature, which generally reflects how the extraordinary flowering of the Dutch art market gave rise to anxieties concerning painting as a seductress of sight.¹⁴ Artworks are looked upon positively in an abstract manner: as metaphors for the mental images inspired by love. A page from Otto Vaenius's *Amorum emblemata* (*Love Emblems*, 1608) shows Amor staring at a painting of a scantily clad woman, to illustrate how love sustains itself through the contemplation of the beloved's mental image [Fig. 8.2]. Amor is presented while painting in Daniël Heinsius's

13 One example of this kind of transmission is the 1644 edition of Ripa's *Iconologia*, incorporating material from Ficino (who is quoted by name ten times), that Samuel van Hoogstraten recommended as a sourcebook for artists in *Inleyding* 92, 111, 223.

14 Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight*, passim.

Ambacht van Cupido (*Cupid's Craft*, 1616): apparently, the mental images inspired by love make lovers similar to artists.¹⁵ Love, to be more precise, is a function of the images provided by the eyes to the faculty of the imagination.

These books drew from an international tradition of poetry in which comparisons with art were not uncommon. Shakespeare describes the lover as a painter:

Mine eye hath played the painter and hath stelled
thy beauty's form in table of my heart,
my body is the frame wherein 'tis held.¹⁶

This formula echoes one of Michelangelo's sonnets, in which the sculptor declares how he is tormented by the mental image of his beloved that he has internalized to such a degree that the frame of his own body can hardly contain it:

You entered me through my eyes [...]
as a cluster of unripe fruit goes into a bottle,
and, once past the neck, grows where it is wider;
so does your image [...] grow once it's inside the eyes, so that I stretch
like a skin inside of which the pulp is swelling.
Having entered me by such a narrow route,
I can hardly dare to believe you'll ever get out.¹⁷

The metaphor of the painter's 'pregnant wit' also merits consideration in this context. The incorporated image may determine the artist's creative process.¹⁸ As the Dutch 'Prince of Poets', Joost van den Vondel, writes about Govaert Flinck:

15 Heinsius Daniël, "Ambacht van Cupido", in *Nederduytsche poemata* (Amsterdam, Janssen: 1616) 71: 'Imaginem eius mecum gesto'.

16 Shakespeare, *Sonnet* 24.

17 *The Poetry of Michelangelo*, trans. – ed. J. Saslow (New Haven – London: 1991) 54, v. 73–80: 'Tu m'entrasti per gli occhi [...] / come grappol d'agresto in un'ampolla, / che doppo'l collo cresce ov'è più largo; / così l'immagin tua [...] / entro per gli occhi cresce, ond'io m'allargo / come pelle ove gonfia la midolla; / entrando in me per sì stretto viaggio, / che tu mai n'esca ardir creder non aggio'.

18 In the words of Van Hoogstraten's *Inleyding*, 'Michelangelo beminde de konst als een Huisvrouw' (p. 349) and his statues became his 'onsterfelijke kinderen' (p. 289). Cf. Pfisterer U., 'Zeugung der Idee—Schwangerschaft des Geistes, sexualisierte Metaphern und Theorien zur Werkgenese in der Renaissance', in Pfisterer U. – Zimmermann A. (eds.), *Animationen, Transgressionen* (Berlin: 2005) 41–72.

Everything Flinck draws or paints
on canvases and panels, looks
like Sofie, his beloved,
who lives in all his veins.¹⁹

Pieter Cornelisz Hooft connects this embodiment to idolatry: the lover's heart is a church where the beloved's image is venerated. What draws my special interest here is Hooft's description of the amorous encounter as an intertwining of ocular rays *from* and *to* the lover:

My vision's beams that mixed with the rays
Of the splendor of your beauty and of your clear eyes,
When they returned to me, they brought with them
The true image of that invisible example
Of the most beautiful that nature had painted on your brow
And the most worthy of your spirit.²⁰

This two-way movement, leaving and entering the eyes, that is presupposed in the theories of love and art, merits further consideration.

Ocular Rays in Two Directions

The pre-modern debate on the direction of visual rays had not been resolved in the seventeenth century. The Arabic opticians, following Aristotle, had described seeing as the painful reception of tiny images, sent out by the objects of vision. Plato and Galen, by contrast, had stated that it is the eye that sends out rays in the act of seeing. This latter theory gave the viewer a particularly active

19 Vondel Joost van den, *De werken van Vondel*, 10 vols. (Amsterdam: 1935) VIII 199–200 (originally written in 1656–1660): 'Al wat Flinck dan trekt of schildert/zweemt, op doecken, en panneel,/naer Sofie, de beminde/die in al zijn aeren leeft'.

20 Hooft Pieter Cornelisz, *Sonnetten. Reden vande waerdicheit der poesie*, Tuynman P. (ed.) (Amsterdam: 1971) 3: 'De stralen mijns gesichts die 'r mengden inde stralen, / Van uwe schoonheits glans, en van u oogen claer, / Weerkerende tot mij, soo brachten sij met haer / De waere Beeltenis dies' onvoorsichtich stalen, / Van 't Aerdichst dat natuur deed' in u voorhoofd malen, / En 't waerdichst van u geest, datmen mach lesen daer. / Dees voerdens' in mijn hart, dat voelende t' beswaer, / Maeckt van de noot een duecht en gaet haer selfs in halen. / Sij maecktent tot een kerck daers' als godin geëert, / Gestadich 't harte dwingt tot vijerige begeert.'



FIGURE 8.3 '*Amor, ut lacryma, ex oculis oritur, in pectus cadit*,' Otto Vaenius, *Amorum emblemata* (Antwerp 1608) 76.

IMAGE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.

role, as the visual rays strike the air with force and transform it, rendering it similar to themselves.²¹

It is this notion of 'action at a distance' that is important in understanding the similar powers ascribed to art and love. 'Love, like tears, originates in the eyes, from which it falls into the breast' of the viewer, writes Vaenius: one of his emblems shows rays darting from the eyes of the beloved, going straight through the lover's heart [Fig. 8.3]. Ficino had described this process in detail. When love heats our 'vital spirits', our blood starts to rise from the heart, leading to increased physical agitation. When the blood is heated into a vapour, this streams out of our eyes in the direction of the object of our desire. Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (1644) conveyed this theory to artists:

21 Cf. Lindbergh D.C., *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago – London: 1976).

How fire darts from the eyes to the heart, Ficino demonstrates when he says that [...] this evaporation of the blood, that we call the spirit [...] shoots out from the eyes, as through glass windows, parallel rays [...] and thus the heart may affect [...] the blood of someone who is close at hand, spreading the spirits throughout the body, and through these spirits it disperses those glittering sparks through all members, but in particular through the eyes: [...] since the eyes are more bright and transparent than any other part of the body [...]. Thus it is no wonder that an open eye directed at someone with great attention sends its arrows into the eyes of the one who looks at it [...] piercing the heart.²²

The metaphor of visual rays as arrows apparently inspired Guercino's painting of Venus (1633), who allures the viewer not just with her exposed skin but also with her gaze, which follows the same direction as the arrow from Cupid's bow, about to hit the viewer [Fig. 8.4]. Baldassare Castiglione's *Libro del cortegiano* (1528) explains what happens next, when the beloved's image, after its entrance through the eyes, is physically incorporated into the lover's body. When those rays mingle with the lover's blood they make him or her receptive to the beloved's image:

22 Ripa Cesare, *Iconologia of uijtbeeldingen des verstants*, trans. D. Pietersz Pers (Amsterdam, Pers: 1644) 384: 'Hoedanigh nu de brand uyte oogen nae't herte schiet, dat bewijst Marsil, Ficinus, seggende, dat de geesten, dieder voortkomen door de hette van't hert, en van't suyverste bloed, altijd in ons soodanigh zijn, als de aert van 't bloed is. Maer gelijckerwijs dese damp van 't bloed, die wy den geest noemen [...] soodanigh is, als t'bloed is, soo schiet het oock door de oogen, als door de glaese vensteren, gelijcke straelen die 't bloed gelijck zijn [...] En also beroert oock 't herte van onse lichaem, door een gestaedige beweginge, het bloed, van die daer nae by is, en van daer spreyt het de geesten door 't gantsche lichaem, en door dieselve geesten verspreyt het de glinsterende voncken, door alle de leeden, doch insonderheyt door de oogen: Want de geest seer licht wesende, stijght oock lichtlijck nae de bovenste deelen van't lichaem: en't licht van den geest glinstert aldermeest door de oogen, om dat de oogen, boven alle andere leeden, helder en doorluchtigh zijn, in sich hebbende licht, glants, dampen en viervoncken. Soo is't dan geen wonder, dat een open oogh, met groot opmercken op iemant gestiert, de pijlen van zijne straelen schiet in de oogen, van die 't oogh beschout: welcke straelen door de oogen van haere tegen-Minnaers schietende, dringen door tot in't herte toe van dese ellendige Minnaers: [...] zy zijn gewont van 't herte, dat de pijlen werpt'. The quotations from Ficino were actually added by Zaratino Castellini in 1613. Cf. Ficino Marsilio, *Platonic Theology*, eds. J. Hankins – W. Bowen – M.J.B. Allen, trans. J. Warden, 6 vols. (Cambridge, MA – London: 2001–2006) IV 13, 4, 193; cf. *De amore* VII.4.



FIGURE 8.4 *Guercino, Venus, Mars, and Cupid, 1633. Oil on canvas, dimensions unknown. Modena, Galleria Estense.*
IMAGE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.

[...] vital spirits [...] enter [through the eyes] just as an arrow flies at a target. They penetrate naturally into the heart, as if it were their proper abode, and, mingling with those other spirits dwelling there, with that most subtle essence of blood that they bring with them, infect the blood near the heart [...] and warm it, making it like themselves [...] ready to receive the impression of that image which they have brought with them.²³

23 Castiglione Baldassare, *Il libro del cortegiano* (Venice, Manutius & Torresano d'Asola: 1528) III 180: '[G]li occhi [...] spesso accendono amore nel cor della persona amata; perché que' vivi spirti che escono per gli occhi, per esser generati presso al core, entrando ancor negli occhi, dove sono indirizzati come saetta al segno, naturalmente penetrano al core come a sua stanza ed ivi si confondono con quegli altri spirti e, con quella sottilissima natura di sangue che hanno seco, infettano il sangue vicino al core, dove son pervenuti, e lo

This transfer of qualities is most effective when the experience is mutual. 'The eyes shoot arrows and bewitch as if they were poison', writes Castiglione, 'most strongly when they send their rays in a straight line into the eyes of the beloved object at the very moment that these do the same; because the spirits meet in that sweet encounter, each takes on the other's quality'.²⁴ When in such a moment of 'action at a distance' a mixture of vital spirits takes place, both the seer and the seen are changed by the experience.

This exchange may not always be positive, and it may even physically hurt the viewer.²⁵ Gregorio Comanini's treatise on painting of 1591 also quotes Ficino, confirming that:

a spiritual vapour issues with these rays, and with this vapour issues blood, as we know from red and running eyes, which infect the eyes of someone who looks at them [...]. Now, this bloody vapour [...] issuing from the heart of the beloved and passing through the heart of the lover [...] wounds the heart and returns to blood. This blood, because it is in some ways foreign to the place, contaminates all the rest with its poison.²⁶

Ficino, as a medical doctor, provides many examples of the negative impact of this ocular infection. The early moderns often used the term *fascinatio* in a negative sense, to denote the powers of the evil eye to affect others just by looking.

riscaldano e fannolo a sé simile ed atto a ricevere la impression di quella imagine che seco hanno portata'.

- 24 Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano* III 180: '[G]li occhi saettano ed affaturano come venefici; e massimamente quando per dritta linea mandano i raggi suoi negli occhi della cosa amata in tempo che essi facciano il medesimo; perché i spiriti s'incontrano ed in quel dolce intoppo l'un piglia la qualità dell'altro'.
- 25 Ovid, *Remedia amoris*, line 615: 'Dum spectant oculi laesos, laeduntur et ipsi/Multaque corporibus transitione nocent', in: Ovid, *The Art of Love, and Other Poems*, trans. J.H. Mozley, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 232 (London: 1979) 218.
- 26 Comanini Gregorio, "Il Figino ovvero del fine della pittura", in Barocchi P. (ed.), *Trattati d'arte del cinquecento: fra manierismo e controriforma*, 3 vols. (Bari: 1960) III 300–301: '[C]on questi raggi esce un vapore spirituale, e con questo vapore esce sangue; come si conosce dagli occhi lippì e rosseggianti, i quali ammorbano della medesima infermità gli occhi di chi li rimira [...]. Ora, questo vapore sanguigno, dice egli, partendo dal cuore di chi nell'amor percote e passando al cuore dell'uom percosso [...] ferisce il cuore e [...] ritorna in sangue. Il qual sangue, per essere in un certo modo pellegrino nell'impiegato, corrompe tutto il rimanente col suo veneno'. Translation adapted from Comanini Gregorio, *The Figino: Or, On the Purpose of Painting*, trans. – eds. A. Doyle – A. Anderson – G. Mariorino (Toronto – Buffalo – London: 2001) 51.

'In the vapours of the eyes there is so great a power, that they can bewitch and infect any that are neer [*sic*] them', according to the physician Cornelius Agrippa, who was read by artists in Italy and the North. He referred to those legendary Scythian women who 'killed anyone they looked angry upon'.²⁷

If Looks Could Kill: The Fateful Gaze

The most obvious example of the maleficent power of the gaze as an explicit theme in art is the image of Medusa. Caravaggio's shield-like picture, made as a prop in a display of knights in armour, seems to look down upon us from a startlingly close distance [Fig. 8.5].²⁸ A variety of Italian epigrams document how viewers were supposed to react to the Gorgon: when we meet her eyes, we turn to stone, numb with amazement at the master's artifice. Reactions such as these inspired Elizabeth Cropper to refer to Caravaggio's 'petrifying art'.²⁹ Likewise in the art of the Netherlands, Medusa iconography reveals what sort of shock reaction was expected of contemporary viewers.³⁰

Love poetry, obviously, uses the reverse formula: whereas the confrontation with Medusa freezes our vital spirits, the sight of a beautiful nude warms and rouses them. The formula that images are made of living flesh and blood, and radiate a sanguine vapour, returns in many Dutch epigrams, in particular on pictures of women.³¹ Here we may recognize tropes that echo Ficino: the sight of the depicted body, and the confrontation with the painted eyes,

27 Agrippa von Nettesheim Heinrich Cornelis, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (London, Gregory Moule: 1651) Book 1, § 50, 146. On Agrippa's relevance, see Lomazzo Gian Paolo, "Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scoltura et architettura", in idem, *Scritti sulle arti*, ed. R.P. Ciardi, 2 vols. (Florence: 1973–1975) II 189; and Van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding* 25, 152–153, 171. *Fascinatio*, the charming power of the gaze, was analyzed in treatises such as Juan Lázaro Gutiérrez's *De fascinatio opusculum* (1643) and Johann Frommann's *Tractato de fascinazione* (1674), on which, see Sanz Hermida J., *Cuatro tratados médicos renascentistas sobre el mal de ojo* (Valladolid: 2001).

28 Langdon H., *Caravaggio: A Life* (London: 1999) 120.

29 Cropper E., "The Petrifying Art: Marino's Poetry and Caravaggio", *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 26 (1991) 193–212.

30 Eck C. van, "The Petrifying Gaze of Medusa: Ambivalence, Ekplexis, and the Sublime", *Journal of the Historians of Netherlandish Art* 8.2 (Summer 2016), DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2016.8.2.3.

31 Weststeijn, "Seeing and the Transfer of Spirits" 153–156.



FIGURE 8.5 *Caravaggio, Medusa, ca. 1597, oil on canvas mounted on wood, 60 × 55 cm. Florence, Uffizi.*

IMAGE COLLECTION INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM.

leads to the heating of the viewer's blood.³² Vital spirits move out of the heart urging him (or possibly her, though I know of no example) to touch the painting. Epigrams emphasize the model's literally 'burning' beauty: the artist supposedly 'kindled and lit the fire of lovers of art, by means of living flesh, and not

32 'De schildergeest [...] Naardien hij zijn penseel ontvonkte aan de zonnestralen/Van ogen, daar de Min hem levende uit verscheen', Vondel Joost van den, "Op een Italiaanse schilderij van Susanne", in *Volledige dichtwerken en oorspronkelijk proza*, Verwey A. (ed.) (Amsterdam: 1937) 943.

paint artfully laid on the canvas'.³³ Images may set the beholder's 'inflammable blood' (*ontvonkbre bloed*) on fire, because 'the eye sets fire to the heart'.³⁴

In discussions of the power of the female gaze and the allure of a woman's skin, Netherlandish authors not only borrow from Ficino's philosophy; they also refer to biblical symbolism. Thus the idea that ocular rays may penetrate someone else's body is corroborated by the *Song of Songs*, which states that the lover's heart has been 'wounded' by one of the beloved's eyes.³⁵ There are curious similarities between a fulsome image of Venus by Werner van der Valckert, depicting Cupid's arrow directed at the viewer, parallel to the beams shooting from Venus's eyes, and a scene from the Old Testament painted by Willem Drost, *Bathsheba Receiving King David's Letter* [Figs. 8.6 & 8.7].³⁶ In the latter work, the viewer appears to have taken David's place in having frontal access to Bathsheba's bared body. She does not seem much embarrassed by the king's letter, as she unflinchingly returns our gaze. The poet Jan de Brune describes how 'through the eyes, covetousness came into David's heart', and concludes in Italian, 'S'occhio non mira, cor non sospira' ('If the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't sigh').³⁷

Yet other biblical stories inspired artists to portray the damaging power of ocular rays. Dangerously seductive women were represented with a brooding stare immediately before or after committing a violent act. One example is Caravaggio's *Salome*, whose protagonist casually lifts Saint John's severed head into the beholder's field of vision and looks us provocatively in the eye [Fig 8.8]. Here one is reminded of an epigram by Caravaggio's friend, Giambattista Marino, in praise of a painting of the same theme: on the basis of the fatal effects

33 Vondel, *Volledige dichtwerken* 946: '[O]m door zulk een middel 't vier/ Des kunstbeminners meer t'ontvonken en ontsteeken/ Door levend vleesch, geen verf, met kunst op doek gestreken'.

34 Vondel, "Op een Italiaanse schilderij van Susanne", in *ibid.*, 943. Vos Jan, *Alle de gedichten*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, Gerrit en Hendrik Bosch: 1726) I 336: '[Z]y brandt ons nu zy slaapt; indien zy wakker wardt, Zoo maakt z'ons heel tot asch: want 't oog ontsteekt het hart'.

35 *Canticum canticorum* 4:9: 'Vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum'.

36 On this image see Sluijter E.J., "'Les regards dards': Werner van den Valckert's Venus and Cupid", in Golahny A. – Mochizuki M.M. – Vergara L. (eds.), *In His Milieu: Essays on Netherlandish Art in Memory of John Michael Montias* (Amsterdam: 2006) 423–439.

37 Brune Jan de, *Wetsteen der vernyften* (Rotterdam: 1994) 276–277: '[B]egeerlikheid, die door d'oogen in Davids hart quam'. Cf. Ripa, *Iconologia* 389; and Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight* 13 ff.



FIGURE 8.6 *Werner van den Valckert, Venus and Cupid, 1612–1614. Oil on canvas, dimensions unknown. United States, Private Collection.*

IMAGE COLLECTION INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM.



FIGURE 8.7 Willem Drost, *Bathsheba*, signed and dated 1654. Oil on canvas, 101 × 86 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

IMAGE COLLECTION INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM.

of her gaze, he compares this 'cruel and beautiful' woman to Medusa.³⁸ Similar in conception is Rubens's *Judith*: she is, in contrast to Salome (and despite her low-cut dress, revealing a breast), a virtuous woman whose look is righteous, but it is evident that these are the same pair of eyes that some moments earlier

38 Marino Giambattista, "Herodiade con la testa di S. Gio. Battista [...] di Luca Cangiasso", in idem, *La Galeria* (Milan, Bidelli: 1620) I 57: '[C]rudele e bella'.



FIGURE 8.8 *Caravaggio, Salome, ca. 1609. Oil on canvas, 116 × 140 cm. Madrid, Palacio Real.*

IMAGE COLLECTION INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF
AMSTERDAM.

beamed their seductive arrows into the eyes of Holofernes, sealing his fate [Fig. 8.9]. Here, the painterly tradition runs parallel to literary statements on the ocular powers of these biblical women. Jacob Cats writes that Judith, with what he calls the 'stratagem' of her eyes, first seduced the Assyrian soldiers and then Holofernes. Cats summarizes: 'the moment he looked, he died'.³⁹ Another of the Bible's virtuous heroines, Jael, was portrayed by Jan Salomon de Bray with an intent gaze, planning her brutal murder of Sisera, her right hand clutching the hammer with which she is about to drive a spike through his head [Fig. 8.10]. Even more arresting may be Johannes Spilberg's rendition, where it is the beholder who is 'invited' to undergo the same aggressive treatment [Fig. 8.11].

39 Cats Jacob, *Sinne- en minnebeelden* (Rotterdam, Pieter van Waesberghe: 1627) X.b.5. 'Eodem stratagemate Iuditha primo vigiles, mox Imperatorem ipsum Assyriorum Holofernem circumvenit. Ut vidit, ut periit usque adeo'.



FIGURE 8.9 *Rubens, Judith with the Head of Holofernes, ca. 1617. Oil on wood, 120 × 111 cm. Braunschweig, Herzog Anton-Ulrich Museum.*

IMAGE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.

Goliath in Love?

Among the biblical repertoire of enemies of the Hebrews slain by virtuous youngsters, another theme, David and Goliath, was depicted in a similar manner, even though ocular seduction plays no obvious role in this story. The painters of the international Caravaggist 'school' often make the scene of *David with the Head of Goliath* follow the choreography of *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* and *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist*: David appears as an attractive half-naked boy looking just as broodingly at the viewer



FIGURE 8.10 *Salomon de Braij Bray, Jael with Deborah and Barak, 1630. Oil on panel, 93 × 72 cm. Ponce, Museo de Arte de Ponce.*

IMAGE COLLECTION INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM.



FIGURE 8.11 *Johannes Spilberg (the Younger)*, Jael, 1644. Oil on canvas, 72 × 68 cm. Berlin, bpk / Gemäldegalerie, SMB / Volker-H. Schneider.

as Judith or Salome, with the severed head of Goliath in a similar position to that of Holofernes or the Baptist. Valentin de Boulogne, Hendrick van Somer, Matthias Stom, and Alessandro Turchi painted healthy young men whose unblinking gaze at the viewer is disturbing in light of the presence of a severed head at their side [Figs. 8.12–8.15].⁴⁰ Their gaze, like that of their female Old

40 Some examples of *David with the Head of Goliath*, similar in composition, are by Tanzio da Varallo, ca. 1625 (Pinacoteca Civica, Varallo); Giuseppe Vermiglio (Koelliker Collection,



FIGURE 8.12 Valentin de Boulogne, *David with the Head of Goliath*, ca. 1620–1622. Oil on canvas, 99 × 134 cm. Madrid, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza.
IMAGE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.

Testament counterparts, evokes the power of ‘action at a distance’ attributed to vision. Of course, the relation between David and Goliath was not overtly one between seducer and seduced. But I would like to suggest that in these paintings a successful visual formula could take precedence over biblical literacy. The visual analogy with the paintings of Judith is so strong that the defeat of Goliath seems to be presented similarly, as the defeat of the lover by the object of his love.

Relevant epigrams clarify what gave these images their appeal. Marino’s well-known collection *La Galeria* (1620), contains what one scholar has called a ‘sado-erotic’ section that describes two paintings of *David and Goliath*, among

Milan); Claude Vignon, ca. 1620–1623 (Blanton Museum of Art, Austin); Nicolas Régnier, 1626 (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon); Nicolas Régnier, 1615–1620 (Galleria Spada, Rome); and Lorenzo Lippi (private collection). The most patently erotic one, however, is by Michele Desubleo in the Church of S. Maria di Galliera in Bologna, see Cottino A., *Michele Desubleo* (Soncino: 2001) 153. I am indebted to Vito Ferorelli for identifying this work.



FIGURE 8.13 *Hendrick van Somer, David with the Head of Goliath, ca. 1645. Oil on canvas, 100 × 74 cm. Nice, Musée des Beaux-Arts.*

IMAGE COLLECTION INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM.



FIGURE 8.14 *Matthias Stom or Gargiulo Domenico, David with the Head of Goliath, Oil on canvas, 99 × 67 cm. London, Trafalgar Galleries.*

IMAGE COLLECTION INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM.



FIGURE 8.15 *Alessandro Turchi, David with the Head of Goliath, undated. Oil on canvas, 125 × 95 cm. Formerly with auctioneer Sotheby's New York, sold January 29, 2016.*

IMAGE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.

five similar works showing Judith, Salome, and Jael.⁴¹ The poems underscore the images' lifelikeness. The viewer is apparently expected to confront the figures as if they were animate, breathing, and speaking, in short to react to 'the things as if they were born, not made'. The poet, for instance, 'grasps [Jael's] thoughts and hears her voice'.⁴² The enjoyment of such lifelikeness makes the gruesomeness of bloody scenes bearable, such as a *David with the Head of Goliath* by Guido Reni.⁴³ Taking one's cue from the poems, it seems that in all these paintings with severed heads, the *living* presence of the young girl or boy, enhanced by their pulsating flesh, is contrasted with the lifeless figure of the older man.

Marino also pays attention to the depicted figures' eyes: a Judith (by Cristofano Allori) appears just as lethal with the 'arrows' of her gaze as she is with her sword, and thus kills Holofernes twice.⁴⁴ Salome, as cited earlier, is for this same quality comparable to Medusa.⁴⁵ In the light of all that has been said, it seems apparent that there is more at stake than a mere metaphor of 'fatal attraction'. When, upon looking at these paintings, we feel ourselves addressed by the protagonist, Ficinian optics suggests that we are physically affected by spirits beaming from the eyes—just think of those Scythian women whose gaze 'killed anyone they looked angry upon'. The severed head, in short, *could be our own head*.

In regard to David and Goliath, there is an important artist's biography that may underpin this idea of an appeal to the contemporary viewer. The metaphorical 'death' of the lover in the arms of the beloved may have been on Caravaggio's mind when he depicted himself as slain by the young man in his *David with the Head of Goliath* [Fig. 8.16].⁴⁶ The identification of Goliath as a self-portrait, first documented in a 1650 description of the Borghese collection, was confirmed by Bellori in 1672.⁴⁷ In this work, it seems to be David's shining

41 Marino, *La Galeria* I 48–57; see also, Langdon, *Caravaggio* 200.

42 Marino, "Iahel, chi uccide Sisar del Cavalier Giuseppe d'Arpino", in *La Galeria* I 49: 'Che come cose sien nate, e non fatte, / Già vi scorgo il pensier, la voce n'odo'.

43 Marino, "David con la testa di Golia di Guido Reni", in *La Galeria* I 51: 's'io ben miro il vincitore, e'l vinto, / Più bello e il vivo, c'horrido l'estinto'.

44 Marino, "Giudit con la testa d'Oloferne di Christoforo Bronzino", in *ibid.*, I 48: '[I]o so ferire, / E di strale, e di spada'.

45 Marino, "Herodiade con la testa di S. Gio. Battista [...] di Luca Cangiaso", in *ibid.*, I 57.

46 Various scholars have discussed this painting in terms of an amorous relationship: see for instance Posèq A., "Caravaggio's Self-Portrait as the Beheaded Goliath", *Konsthistorisk tidskrift* 59.3 (1990) 169–182; and Langdon, *Caravaggio* 384.

47 Bellori Giovan Pietro, *Le vite de' pittori scultori e architetti moderni*, ed. E. Borea (Turin: 2009) I 223: 'la testa di Golia, che è il suo proprio ritratto'. See also, Frommel C.L., "Caravaggio und seine Modelle", *Castrum Peregrini* 96 (1971) 21–56.



FIGURE 8.16 *Caravaggio, David with the Head of Goliath, ca. 1610. Oil on canvas, 126 × 99 cm. Rome, Galleria Borghese.*
IMAGE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.

flesh, set off against the dark background as if it were a source of light itself, that ‘acts at a distance’ on the beholder. The boy has just averted the gaze of his living eyes, thus shifting attention to the dead eyes of the artist—or rather, to their blank stupor, since the blood that moments before might have beamed out in its heated and vaporous form, is now gushing from his severed neck,

drawing vital spirits from the face. It is perhaps also important to note where David's stone has struck Goliath—on the forehead, which was regarded as the seat of the imagination, the faculty with which the lover generates images of his beloved.⁴⁸

It seems that viewers of Caravaggio's painting were expected to identify with the painter, who is struck by the beauty of his model. As Cropper has argued, Caravaggio's images thus reflect on their own artifice in a manner that closely accords with the play on the contrast between the living and the dead in Marino's poetry.⁴⁹ When the viewer identifies with the lover in his helpless admiration for the beloved, he dies—stunned by the *meraviglia* of the painting's lifelikeness—while the painted David, conversely, becomes animate. (The visual emphasis on Goliath's blood might therefore be interpreted as an allusion to Caravaggio's reputed power to give 'blood and flesh' to his living figures.)⁵⁰ To give another example: according to Baldinucci, Allori portrayed himself as Holofernes and a girl beloved by him as Judith. Likewise in a *Judith* by Titian, the severed head was identified as a self-portrait. These painters apparently expressed their own metaphorical deaths in the face of their models' beauty [Fig. 8.17].⁵¹

The artifice of Marino's epigrams suggests many similar 'identity swaps': the artwork comes alive; the model addresses the viewer rather than the artist; the viewers identify with the artist, or with the model; and ultimately, the petrified viewers themselves become sculpture—the effect is one of sensual and mental confusion.⁵² Marino, in fact, expanded on an older generation of poets

48 Van den Doel, *Ficino*, 196.

49 Cropper, "Petrifying Art" 205–206.

50 Bellori, *Le vite* I 229: '[I]l sangue e l'incarnazione'.

51 Baldinucci, as quoted in Shearman J., "Cristofano Allori's 'Judith'", *The Burlington Magazine* 121 (1979) 3–10: 'Ritrasse egli al vivo nella faccia di lei l'effigie della Mazzafirra [...] dipinse se stesso in quel quadro per Oloferne; la faccia d'una vecchia [...] dicesi, che fusse tolta al vivo dalla madre della medesima Mazzafirra'. In the role of the beheaded figure, as also in the role of the perpetrator, painters were apparently fond of using self-portraits; Lavinia Fontana and Artemisia Gentileschi, for example, painted themselves as Judith. Vasari mentions a painting of *David and Goliath* by Giorgione, in which one of the figures is a self-portrait; Vasari, *Le vite* III 19–20: 'una fatta per Davit (e per quel che si dice, è il suo ritratto) con una zazzera, come si costumava in que' tempi in fino alle spalle, vivace e colorita, che par di carne: ha un braccio et il petto armato, col quale tiene la testa mozza di Golia'. The protagonists' gaze at the viewer may have caused his early biographers to identify these works as *portraits historiés*. If my argument on ocular rays is correct, however, the painterly conceit of the gaze may also have been motivated differently.

52 Cf. Marino, *La Galeria* I 34: '[S]ì di senso lo stupor mi priva, / ch'io son quasi la statua ella par viva'. Seeing a painted *Massacre of the Innocents*, Marino, in *ibid.*, I 58, marvels how the painter's artifice brings the children to life, only for them to be killed perpetually.



FIGURE 8.17 *Titian, Judith/Salome, ca. 1515. Oil on canvas, 89 × 73 cm. Rome, Galleria Doria Pamphili.*

IMAGE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.

that had tried to blur and confound the roles of author, model, and audience, all of whom could trade places in the autonomous world of poetry. A poem might, for instance, encourage the *reader* to hold the beloved and kiss her lips,

Conversely, the fact that a depicted figure causes real excitement provides a source of amazement; see Marino's follower, Battista Giuseppe, "Innamorato del ritratto di bella donna", Getto G. (ed.), *Opere scelte di Giovan Battista Marino e dei marinisti*, 2 vols. (Turin: 1954) I 392: '[S]ento da finta immago ardor non finto'. See also Langdon, *Caravaggio* 200–204.

still wet with the poet's kisses. This was the 'concrete reading' of sixteenth-century poetry, as a modern scholar has put it.⁵³ Painters, whose direct appeal to the sense of sight allowed them to get so much more concrete, seem to have taken their cue from poetry. Their most explicit means to reach a similar, even stronger effect of beholder participation, was to have the depicted figures look the viewer straight in the eye.

Rembrandt's Eyes

Rembrandt seems to have been aware of what preoccupied Caravaggio's international followers, when he decided to paint several variations on the theme of the lover's gaze. Shortly after his marriage, he portrayed his wife Saskia as Judith with a plunging neckline, a curved sword in her right hand, a severed head in the left. (Later he repented, changing the head into a bunch of flowers and the girl into Flora).⁵⁴ The next year, in an attempt to demonstrate his painterly prowess to a learned friend, he addressed the subject of ocular attraction in a more complex manner.⁵⁵ This was one of art history's most brutal scenes: *The Blinding of Samson*, now in Frankfurt [Fig. 8.18]. The painting seems to warn not only against women, but also against the fateful powers of vision. Ripa's entry on the ocular origin of love, quoted earlier, emphasizes that Samson's attraction to Delilah was rightly punished when his eyes, which had betrayed him, were put out.⁵⁶ The painting shows the anguished hero's eyes narrowed to slits, blood spurting upward—an innovative snapshot effect that Van Hoogstraten called *oogenblikkig*, 'in the blink of an eye'.⁵⁷ This seems a crude comment on the poetic metaphor of the sanguine spirits that effuse

53 'During reading, [the beloved] is being, as it were, kissed [by the reader], her lips still wet from the kisses of [the poet]'; see Guépin J.P., *De kunst van Ianus Secundus: De 'kussen' en andere gedichten* (Amsterdam: 1991) 454. Although this refers to the older, short-lived Dutch poet Janus Secundus (1511–1536), Marino's generation clearly adopted, and exaggerated the same artifice.

54 Rembrandt, *Flora*, 1635, oil on canvas, 124 × 98 cm. London, National Gallery. See Brown C., "Rembrandt's 'Saskia as Flora' X-Rayed", in Logan A.M. (ed.), *Essays in Northern European Art Presented to Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann on his Sixtieth Birthday* (Doornspijk: 1983) 48–52. I thank Stephanie Dickey for kindly calling this painting to my attention.

55 He offered the painting to Constantijn Huygens; see Lawrence C., "'Worthy of Milord's House'? Rembrandt, Huygens and Dutch Classicism", *Konsthistorisk tidskrift* 54. 1 (1985) 16–26.

56 Ripa, *Iconologia* 389.

57 On *oogenblikkig*, see Weststeijn, *Visible World* 185–191.



FIGURE 8.18 *Rembrandt, The Blinding of Samson, ca. 1636. Oil on canvas, 236 × 302 cm. Frankfurt am Main, Städelsches Kunstinstitut.*

IMAGE COLLECTION INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM.

from the mirrors of the soul. And then, in the background, Delilah's unfazed eyes are meeting *ours* [Fig. 8.19]. If looks can be fatal, as Rembrandt seems to emphasize, mastery of the art of painting carries great responsibility indeed. Painting itself was, after all, a notorious 'seductress of sight'.⁵⁸

The images collected here are suggestive of how artists conceived of vision as a two-way transfer of qualities. It is on the one hand the art-lover's roused spirits that, projected on to the object, virtually change paint into living skin, with blood pulsating just underneath. On the other, it is the painting's artifice, in regard to the figures' eyes in particular, that invites the viewer to take part in its alternative reality. Such a mutual ocular exchange echoes closely the theory of love as a function of sight, and sight as a function of love, as outlined by

58 Camphuysen Dirck Raphaelsz, *Verscheyden theologische wercken* (Amsterdam: 1638) 108: 'Verleyt-Ster van't gezicht'; cf. Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight* 12.



FIGURE 8.19 Detail of Fig. 8.18.

Ficino and Comanini. The English poet John Donne is perhaps most eloquent, speaking about a 'negotiation' between two lovers, whose rays of vision have become intertwined ('twisted [...] upon one double string').⁵⁹ Likewise, in the artistic experience 'each takes on the other's quality', in Castiglione words.⁶⁰ Are we looking at art—or is art looking at us?

59 Donne John, "The Extasy", in idem, *Love Poems* xxxv: 'Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread / Our eyes upon one double string; / [...] And pictures in our eyes to get / Was all our propagation. / [...] Our souls (which to advance their state / Were gone out) hung 'twixt her and me./And whilst our souls negotiate there [...]'].

60 Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano* III 180: '[L]'un piglia la qualità dell'altro'. See above, note 24.

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PART 4

*Amorous Desire, Domestic Virtue,
and Love's Mirror*



Agape, Caritas, and Conjugal Love in Paintings by Rembrandt and Van Dyck

Stephanie S. Dickey

Among the Dutch and Flemish paintings on display in The Royal Collection in London are two that at first glance could not seem more different: Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669), *Portrait of the Shipbuilder Jan Rijcksen and his Wife Griet Jans*, 1633, and Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), *Cupid and Psyche*, ca. 1639 [Figs. 9.1–9.2]. The former is one of the first ambitious group portraits painted by Rembrandt for wealthy citizens in Amsterdam, where he had just relocated from his native Leiden, while the latter is the only surviving mythological scene from Van Dyck's final years as painter to the English court.¹ Examining



FIGURE 9.1 *Rembrandt van Rijn, The Shipbuilder and his Wife (Portrait of Jan Rijcksen and Griet Jans), 1633. Oil on canvas, 113.8 × 169.8 cm. Royal Collection Trust, London.*
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1 For essential data, see respectively Bruyn J. et al., *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, 6 vols. (The Hague – Dordrecht – Boston: 1982–2015) II 367–377, Cat. A77; and Barnes S. et al., *Van Dyck: A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings* (New Haven: 2004) 430–431, Cat. IV.3.



FIGURE 9.2 Anthony van Dyck, *Cupid and Psyche*, ca. 1639. Oil on canvas, 200.2 × 912.6 cm. Royal Collection Trust, London.

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these works in proximity, I began to see that they have more in common than at first appears, and that their congruence highlights an aspect of the imagery of love that deserves greater attention. The aim of this essay is to illuminate the essential theme that binds these works together. The pictorial trope they share is a dynamic encounter between lovers in which one partner rushes to the aid of the other. The underlying context is marriage: the relationships of the patrons themselves (on one hand the long-standing partnership of a middle class couple, on the other the dynastically motivated but affectionate union of a sovereign and his consort) as well as pictorial and cultural conventions for conjugal love in the early modern Netherlands and Britain.

The complex union of marriage partners, a bond with social as well as personal consequences, has never been reducible simply to physical intimacy or erotic desire. Indeed, for a mature couple like Jan Rijcksen and Griet Jans, it seems unlikely—and would indeed have been considered unseemly—that erotic love would play a central role in their relationship. In Castiglione's *Courtier*, Pietro Bembo flatly observes that 'the thoughts and waies of sensual love are farre unfitting for ripe age'.² At the Caroline court, the concept of romantic love was widely celebrated in masques and poetry as well as in works of art, but its physical charge was tempered both by Charles' and Henrietta's distaste for the moral laxity that had prevailed at the court of Charles' father, James I, and by the impact of Neoplatonism, whereby earthly love is valued as a pathway to the divine.³ In the story of Cupid and Psyche, even the God of Love himself embraces conjugal fidelity, at least temporarily. Thus, both paintings and their contexts prompt us to look beyond erotic desire for meanings inherent in the representation of encounters between loving partners.

The ancient Platonic tradition identifying three forms of love—*eros*, *agape*, and *philia* (friendship)—profoundly influenced later ethical systems, including the Christian theology of love. Amid the doctrinal debates that fractured early modern Catholicism and divided Protestants in the Netherlands, the two 'great commandments'—to love God and to love one's neighbour as oneself⁴—did not escape interpretation, but they retained universal authority. The complex relationship of these precepts to the Platonic system is beyond the scope of the present study,⁵ but a few notes may be useful. Although often identified with sexuality, *eros* can be spiritual as well as earthly (longing for union with the ultimate good, that is, with God), but either way, *eros* is essentially selfish, motivated by desire to possess the beloved and longing for reciprocation. *Agape*, in contrast, is altruistic: the pouring down of God's unmerited love

2 Castiglione Baldassare, *The Courtyer of Count Baldessar Castilio diuided into foure Bookes ... done into Englyshe by Thomas Hoby* (London: Willyam Seres, 1561), IV 54. (First Italian edition 1528.) Cf. De Jongh E., "Bol vincit amorem", *Simiolus* 12, 2/3 (1982–1982) 147–161, 154, with more on the iconography of Cupid and marital chastity.

3 Veevers E., *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments* (Cambridge: 1989); Griffey E. (ed.), *Henrietta Maria: Piety, Politics and Patronage* (Aldershot: 2008); and further below.

4 Matthew 22:37–40; John 13:34–35; Luke 10:27.

5 See Nygren A., *Agape and Eros* (London: 1953); Levy D., "The Definition of Love in Plato's Symposium", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 40, 2 (1979) 285–291; Osborne C., *Eros Unveiled. Plato and the God of Love* (Oxford: 1994); Watson F., *Agape, Eros, Gender: Towards a Pauline Sexual Ethic* (Cambridge: 2000).

upon humankind, epitomized in the Crucifixion of Christ. While the Greek term *agape* is often equated with the Latin *caritas*, early modern theologians interpreted them as related but separate concepts. For Augustine, *caritas* signified love for God (*amor dei*); love of neighbor (*amor proximi*) was a by-product inspired by the divine spark within the human soul.⁶ For Luther, the one force leads to the other: God's love for mankind flows through the believer in acts of charity, and faith "finds expression in works of the freest service, cheerfully and lovingly done, with which a man willingly serves another without hope of reward".⁷

The paintings under review here were both created for Roman Catholic patrons living in a predominantly Protestant society.⁸ Their imagery reflects social ideals for conjugal relations as well as religious precepts. Without delving further into theology, the discussion that follows relies on a basic interpretation of *agape* as divine love and *caritas* as its human expression. The English theologian John Rogers (1632) brings this concept into a familial context when he writes, "Love is a sanctified affection of the heart, whereby whosoever is indued withall, endeavoureth to doe all the good he can to all; but especially, to them that are nearest unto him."⁹

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century imagery offers a variety of prescriptive ideals for conjugal love. For instance, a print sequence engraved by Jan Saenredam after designs by Hendrick Goltzius posits three motivations for marriage. Marriage prompted by sensual love risks descent into lustful excess, but even worse is the greedy and duplicitous practice of marriage for money,

6 See, e.g. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D.W. Robertson, Jr. (New York: 1958) 111.10.16; Nygren, *Agape and Eros* 55–56, 449–562. For critiques of Nygren's opposition between *eros* and *agape*, see, i.a., Outka G., *Agape. An Ethical Analysis* (New Haven – London: 1972); Byrne P. – Houlden L. (eds.), *Companion Encyclopedia of Theology* (New York and London: 2002) 695–696, 745–746, 824; Bonner G., *Freedom and Necessity: St. Augustine's Teaching on Divine Power and Human Freedom* (Washington: 2007) 27–33. For Augustinian *caritas* and Dutch art, see also Fowler C.O., "Abraham Bloemaert and Caritas: A Lesson in Perception," in Melion W. – Ramakers B. (eds.), *Personification: Embodying Meaning and Emotion* (Leiden: 2016) 545–571. *Agape* and *caritas* have been articulated for modern Roman Catholics in Pope Benedict XVI's 2005 encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*.

7 Luther Martin, *The Freedom of a Christian* (1520) cited in Dillenberger J. (ed.), *Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings* (New York: 1961) 74; cf. Nygren, *Agape and Eros* 681–737; Forell G.W., *Faith Active in Love: An Investigation of the Principles Underlying Luther's Social Ethics* (Minneapolis: 1954); Cefalu P., *Moral Identity in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: 2004) 134–156, esp. 137.

8 It is unclear whether Henrietta Maria or Charles I commissioned Van Dyck's painting, but the queen was certainly one of its primary intended viewers. See further below.

9 Rogers John, *A Treatise of Love* (London: John Dawson for Nathanael Newberry, 1632) 24–25; Cefalu, *Moral Identity* 139.

over which Satan officiates. Against these negative exempla, the third plate celebrates the ideal of spiritual marriage, in which a couple are united by their shared faith, leading to mutual affection, virtuous conduct, and marital fidelity [Fig. 9.3].¹⁰ In the writings of moralists, spiritual marriage took on an especially important role for the elderly. In Rembrandt's portrait of another mature couple, the Mennonite preacher and cloth merchant Cornelis Anslo and his wife Aeltje Schouten, spiritual marriage is enacted as a partnership grounded in reading and discussion of the Bible.¹¹ In the Rijksen portrait, it is figured through one partner's loving service to the other.

In images and writings tracing the progress of women's lives, erotic love is associated with early adulthood, the time of life dedicated to courtship and the choice of a mate.¹² Subsequent to marriage, motherhood becomes the dominant trope for figuring femininity, with maternal affection superseding erotic love as the focus of fulfillment for the mature woman. In 1555, Dirk Volckertsz Coornhert engraved a series of six prints after designs by Maarten van Heemskerck based on a familiar Old Testament passage extolling the virtuous housewife.¹³ In a central scene, we see that the wife's job is to nourish and provide for her family [Fig. 9.4]. Activities such as cooking and cleaning can be understood as onerous duties, but when undertaken with selfless devotion, they can also be viewed as willing expressions of love. Thus, the woman's giving of herself in maternal care came to symbolize the cardinal virtue of Charity, personified as a female figure cradling two or more children.¹⁴ Caecilie Weissert describes personifications of *Caritas* as connecting love of one's fellow men with love of God but also, and in my view more germanely, with God's love for humankind.¹⁵ Giving of her time, her efforts, and even her body, the nurturing

- 10 Veldman I.M., "Lessons for Ladies: A Selection of Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Dutch Prints", *Simiolus* 16, 2/3 (1986) 113–127. Cf. De Jongh, "Bol vincit amorem" 154–155; Franits W., *Paragons of Virtue: Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* (Cambridge: 1993) 62–110.
- 11 Rembrandt, *Portrait of Cornelis Claesz Anslo and Aeltje Gerritsdr Schouten*, 1641, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Berlin; Bruyn et al., *Corpus* 111 Cat. A143; see Dickey S.S., *Rembrandt. Portraits in Print* (Amsterdam – Philadelphia: 2004) 45–53.
- 12 See Franits W., *Paragons of Virtue* 18–61; Kolfin E., *The Young Gentry at Play: Northern Netherlands Scenes of Merry Companies* (Leiden: 2005).
- 13 Proverbs 31:10–31; Veldman, "Lessons for Ladies" 114–117; Franits, *Paragons of Virtue* 72, 86–87.
- 14 1 Corinthians 13:13.
- 15 Romans 5:6–9; Weissert C., "Personifications of Caritas as Reflexive Figures", in Melion W. – Ramakers B. (eds.), *Personification: Embodying Meaning and Emotion* (Leiden: 2016) 489–517, pp. 498–501. See also Fowler, "Bloemaert and Caritas" 548–550, 553–555, 559. On *amor dei* as essentially selfish, see Nygren, *Eros and Agape*.



FIGURE 9.3 Jan Saenredam after Hendrick Goltzius, *Spiritual Love*, ca. 1595, from the series *Three Kinds of Marriages*. Engraving, 234 × 160 mm. RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM (RP-P-1892-A-17154).

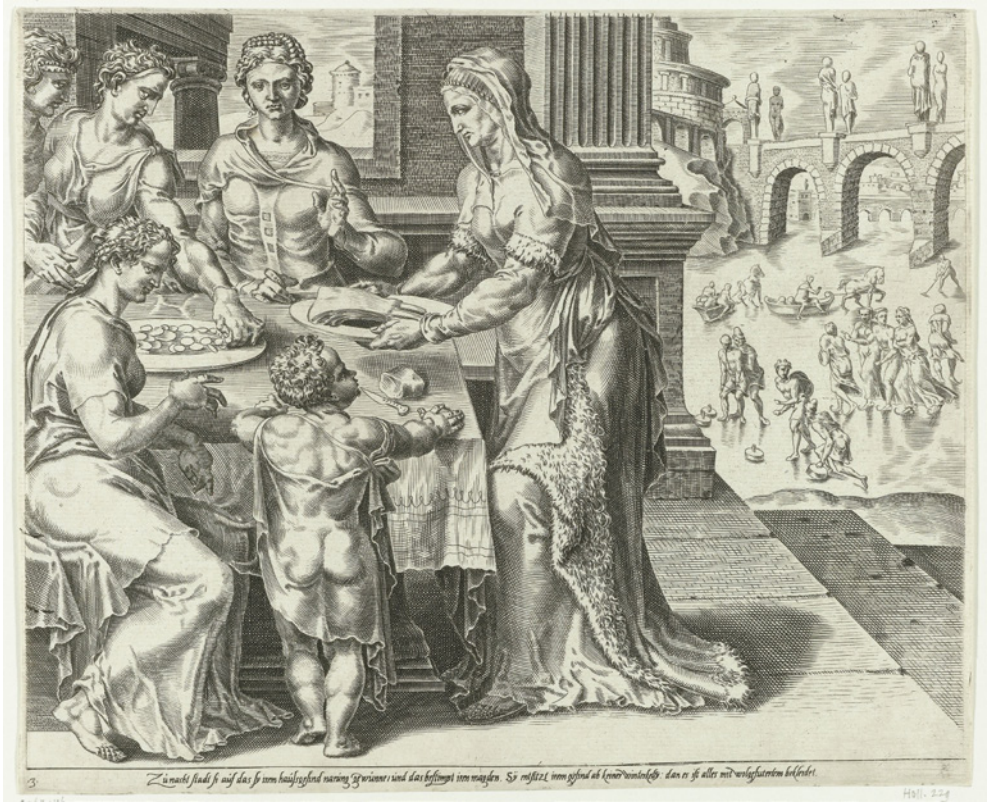


FIGURE 9.4 Dirk Volckertsz Coornhert after Maarten van Heemskerck, *The Virtuous Housewife Serves her Family*, 1555, from series *In Praise of the Virtuous Housewife*, 1555. Engraving, 248 × 205 mm. RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM (RP-P-1963-106).

mother enacts *caritas* as an outpouring of *agape*, channeling divine compassion through her acts of service to her family. In an engraving by Jacob Matham after Hendrick Goltzius, plaques in the upper corners associate *Caritas* with two well-known emblems of self-sacrifice: the Crucifixion of Christ and the pelican feeding her children from her own beak (thought at the time to be from her breast) [Fig. 9.5]. The Latin inscription, signed by the Catholic poet Franco Estius, extols *agape* as the celestial love that binds heaven and earth.¹⁶ Thus, the figural personification metonymically links godly *agape* with human *caritas*.

16 Attributed to Jacob Matham, *Caritas*, engraving from a series depicting the Seven Virtues, designed by Hendrick Goltzius. I am grateful to Walter Melion for the following



FIGURE 9.5 Jacob Matham after Hendrick Goltzius, *Caritas*, 1593. Engraving, 321 × 167 mm.
RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM (RP-P-1963-106).

Can this trope be transferred to the representation of husband and wife? Weissert notes that Erasmus found *caritas* in a husband's moulding of his wife's character and a wife's deployment of feminine charm to inspire virtuous conduct in her mate.¹⁷ As we will see, the latter precept parallels feminist ideals of Platonic love and *honnêté* in fashion at the court of Queen Henrietta Maria.¹⁸ However, it does not offer a satisfying context for Rembrandt's double portrait, where the bustling figure of Griet Jans can hardly be credited with feminine allure. Instead, her devoted attention to her husband recalls the housewife whose virtue consists in faith and service [Fig. 9.4].¹⁹ In lived experience, the mother's duty to care for the family obviously includes husband as well as children (in Heemskerck's formulation, servants benefit, too). The visual convention separating conjugal from maternal love simply avoids a potentially confusing mix of *eros* and *caritas* while providing a clear way to differentiate youth from middle age. It would be typical of Rembrandt to value the observation of real life over allegorical abstraction.²⁰ My analysis of his *Portrait of Jan Rijcksen and Griet Jans* argues that *caritas* can also be represented as an ideal of love within marriage [Fig. 9.1].

What prompted Jan Rijcksen and Griet Jans to commission a portrait from Rembrandt? The answer is unknown. In 1633, they were both in their early seventies and had been married for forty-eight years. They were Roman Catholic (like several other patrons of Rembrandt, who served an ecumenical range of clients) and lived on the Rapenburg in the northern part of Amsterdam. Both came from families associated with shipbuilding. Jan had served since at least 1600 as master shipbuilder to the Dutch East India Company, in which he was also an investor. His business interests suggest considerable wealth. An inventory of paintings passed down to their son shows that their art collection, while

translation: "Divine love, gentle and dear, the celestial source, / Binds heaven to earth with a brazen knot." For a related image and inscription, see Fowler, "Bloemaert and Caritas" 553–554, Fig. 19.5.

17 Weissert, "Personifications" 506–507.

18 Veevers, *Images of Love* 3–47; and further below.

19 Proverbs 31:30–31: "Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing / But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. / Give her of the fruit of her hands, / And let her own works praise her in the gates." Cf. De Jongh, "Bol vincit amorem" 154–155, for Jacob Cats and other moralists who condemned erotic desire in marriage, especially for mature couples.

20 Rembrandt's habit of "taking nature as his only model" (Houbraken A., *De Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen* [Amsterdam: 1718–21, 2nd ed. 's-Gravenhage: 1753] 267–268) and critiques of it concern the content of his work as well as the rendering of physical form. See, i.a., Suijter E.J., *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* (Amsterdam: 2006).

not large, came to include a second portrait of a family member by Rembrandt and works by other prominent artists of the time.²¹ Given the advanced age of the sitters, their conservative dress, and their middling social standing, their choice of the newly fashionable format of a double portrait rather than the standard pendant pair is noteworthy in itself. Equally surprising is that they chose the most audacious young artist in Amsterdam to paint it. Rembrandt had recently demonstrated, in *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, a fresh and invigorating approach to group portraiture.²² *The Anatomy Lesson* animates a conventional formula, but the Rijksen double portrait goes farther still. While some painters, notably Frans Hals, had begun to introduce informality into marriage portraiture, there is no known precedent for the dramatic urgency that Rembrandt brings to his depiction of this elderly pair. The portrait becomes an action scene in which the couple's daily life plays out before the viewer's eyes. Rembrandt's creative fusion of portraiture with the dynamic conventions of history painting would culminate in *The Night Watch* of 1642.²³

Jan Rijksen sits at his desk, occupied with what appears to be a drawing of a ship's hull. Caught between his fingers is a compass. This device has a long pedigree as a symbol of measurement and design, the attribute of a creative mind; it is featured in a number of medieval manuscript illuminations as the tool of choice for the Deus Artifex himself.²⁴ In the title page to the 1630 edition of Richard Braithwaite's *The English Gentleman*, 'Vocation' is personified as a merchant using a compass to study a globe; a ship stands at anchor in the background, connecting this imagery thematically with Rijksen's milieu.²⁵

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- 21 They married 18 May 1585, age 25. Their son's 1659 inventory lists 20 paintings most likely inherited, including the double portrait and a portrait of an uncle ("Harder Oom") by Rembrandt. Eeghen I.H. van, "Jan Rijksen en Griet Jans", *Amstelodamum. Maandblad voor de kennis van Amsterdam* 57 (1970) 121–127; Golahny A., "Rembrandt's Dialogue with Italian Art: *The Shipbuilder and his Wife* of 1633", in Hanni M.A. (ed.), *Breaking New Ground in Art History. A Festschrift in Honor of Alicia Craig Faxon* (Washington: 2014) 9–24, esp. 12–13.
 - 22 Rembrandt, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, 1632, Mauritshuis, The Hague; Bruyn et al., *Corpus* II Cat. A51.
 - 23 Rembrandt, *The Militia Company of District II under the Command of Captain Frans Banninck Cocq, known as the Night Watch*, 1642, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; Bruyn et al., *Corpus* III Cat. A146. Frans Hals' *Portrait of Isaac Massa and Beatrix van der Laen* (1622, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam) conveys informality but lacks dramatic action.
 - 24 E.g. medieval illuminations depicting God as architect of the universe, such as Frontispiece, Codex Vindobonensis 2554, f.1 verso, ca. 1220–1230, Austrian National Library, Vienna.
 - 25 Braithwaite Richard, *The English Gentleman* (London: John Haviland 1630), title page by Robert Vaughan.

Griet Jans has just entered her husband's workspace. Still grasping the heavy door handle, she leans forward to offer him a letter. The visual dynamic of one figure who delivers a message and another who receives it has roots in master-and-servant portraits, developed in the Italian Renaissance and suavely interpreted for a Dutch sitter by Thomas de Keyser in his 1627 *Portrait of Constantijn Huygens with a Secretary*, a painting certainly known to Rembrandt, whom Huygens admired.²⁶ However, an employee operates from obligation, while a wife's *caritas* is freely given. Griet is not her husband's servant, but rather his partner and equal. Rembrandt emphasizes this by giving her equal weight in the composition and a forceful role in the action.²⁷ The fundamental ideal promoted by moralists such as Jacob Cats and Petrus Wittewrongel is the kind of relationship now called companionate marriage, in which husband and wife are bound by mutual respect, affection, and service as well as by physical intimacy.²⁸ Rembrandt's double portrait frames the Rijcksen marriage as just such a partnership, in which the elderly pair works together for the good of their household.

Conveying haste and self-determination, Griet's active pose differentiates her from dutiful messengers like the anonymous boy who deferentially approaches Huygens. Contemporaries might in fact have wondered why Griet has chosen to carry the letter herself. Maids were regular go-betweens in the exchange of correspondence, as genre paintings such as Vermeer's *The Love Letter* attest.²⁹ We may also wonder how far she has come to deliver it. Rijcksen is at work in a room constructed of rough stone and bare wood planks, at a table covered in plain green cloth. This does not look like the domestic interior of a wealthy couple. The Rapenburg, where they lived, was not far from the harbor. Might the setting of Rembrandt's painting be Rijcksen's office at the

26 Thomas de Keyser, *Constantijn Huygens with a Secretary*, 1627, London, National Gallery; Golahny, "Rembrandt's Dialogue" 14–16.

27 Golahny, "Rembrandt's Dialogue" 11–12, notes that this contradicts the traditional gender dynamic of active male and passive female.

28 See Ingram M., "Courtship and Marriage c. 1500–1750", in Toulalan S. – Fisher K. (eds.), *The Routledge History of Sex and the Body: 1500 to the Present* (Abingdon – New York: 2013) 313–327; for the Netherlands, Cats Jacob, *Houwelijk. Dat is de gansche gelegentheyt des echten staets* (Middelburg: J.P. van der Venne, 1625) *passim*; Schama S., *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: 1987) 420–427; Franits, *Paragons of Virtue* 67.

29 Vermeer, *The Love Letter*, ca. 1669, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum; for this motif, see, i.a., Sutton P.C. (ed.), *Love Letters: Dutch Genre Paintings in the Age of Vermeer* [exh. cat. National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin; Bruce Museum, Greenwich] (London: 2003).

shipyard, rather than their home? If so, Griet's effort to leave the house and bring the message personally gains further significance.

Jacob Cats and other Dutch moralists subscribed to the traditional belief that woman's place was in the home. Yet, foreign travellers frequently remarked that Dutch women were exceptionally well-trained in matters of commerce and often assisted their husbands in managing their business affairs.³⁰ This paradox is embodied in Rembrandt's representation of Griet: her decision to visit her husband's office is noteworthy both because it means leaving her own domain and because we infer that she understands his work well enough to recognize the urgency of the message she bears.

Griet's brisk motion suggests that she herself has little time to spare. Her domestic responsibilities, momentarily set aside, are represented by a subtle detail: hanging from her waist and over her skirt, silhouetted against the door at right, is a pouch attached to a chain. It is made of black cloth to match her skirt and jacket. Technical examination suggests that Rembrandt took pains to enhance the profile of the pouch against the light wood of the wall.³¹ This is her *chatelaine*, a chain with portable pocket, keys, sewing implements and other accessories that was a common attribute for housewives going about their daily business. It is a frequent feature in costume prints and genre scenes [e.g., Fig. 9.6]³² but extremely rare in portraiture, where accessories tend to reference wealth, status, or more elevated pastimes such as devotional reading. The *chatelaine* swinging from Griet's waist enhances the sense that we are witnessing a moment of spontaneous, quotidian activity rather than a formally posed portrait. It also attests to Griet's domestic responsibilities as the busy mistress of her household: the *chatelaine* is as much her occupational attribute as the compass is Rijcksen's. Thus, this detail supports Rembrandt's construction of their interaction as the give-and-take of equal partners. In this context, the subordination of her own concerns to those of her husband calls attention to her selfless care for him. In short, like the provision of food in Heemskerck's depiction of the ideal housewife, Griet's delivery of the letter is her performance of *caritas* [Fig. 9.4].

30 See, i.a., Schama, *Embarrassment of Riches*, 375–480; and Franits, *Paragons of Virtue*.

31 Bruyn et al., *Corpus* II 368–369.

32 *Elegant Woman with a Feather Fan*, attributed to Adriaen Matham after Dirk Hals, title page and first plate in series of 12 prints published by Jacob Matham ca. 1619–23 with title *Habitus et cultus Matronarum Nobilium et Rusticarum apud Batavos*.



FIGURE 9.6 *Adriaen Matham (?) after Dirk Hals, Elegant Woman with a Feather Fan, title page to: *Habitus et cultus Matronarum Nobilium et Rusticarum apud Batavos*, ca. 1619–1623, engraving, 197 × 139 mm.*
 RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM (RP-P-OB-27.263X).

Van Dyck painted his *Cupid and Psyche* a few years after Rembrandt completed the Rijksen double portrait, and for very different viewers [Fig. 9.2]. It is likely that the two artists had met in 1631, when Van Dyck visited The Hague. Rembrandt, only seven years his junior, certainly admired and learned from the Flemish master's work. Whether respect was reciprocated is unclear.³³ However, I do not intend to suggest a direct connection between this painting and Rembrandt's. Rather, visual and contextual analysis reveals an essential sympathy of content that prompted fundamentally consonant approaches to figural interaction.

The story of Cupid and Psyche derives from Lucius Apuleius' picaresque comedy, *The Golden Ass*, written in the second century and circulated in various forms throughout early modern Europe. It was translated into English by William Adlington in 1566 and into Dutch by 1608. The English version may be more important for Van Dyck, but a Dutch translation published in Haarlem in 1636 is intriguing because the title page promotes the book's usefulness for painters and poets.³⁴ As told by Apuleius, the story of Cupid and Psyche is a tale of passion beset by obstacles and of virtue compromised by curiosity and rescued by love. To summarize, Cupid fell in love with the mortal princess Psyche, whose father planned to sacrifice her to appease an ill omen. The west wind, Zephyr, carried her off to a pleasure grove, where Cupid visited her each night but left before dawn, thus concealing his identity. Urged on by her sisters, who convinced her that her husband was a hideous serpent, Psyche stole a glance at Cupid as he slept. Intending to kill a monster, she discovered a beautiful god and was overcome with desire. A drip of hot oil from her lamp awakened Cupid and he fled. When Psyche appealed to Cupid's mother for help in finding him, the jealous Venus sent her to complete a series of perilous tasks, the last of which was to venture into the underworld and persuade

33 In his portrait series, *The Iconography*, Van Dyck included several Dutch artists but not Rembrandt. Dickey S.S., "Van Dyck in Holland: *The Iconography* and its Impact on Rembrandt and Lievens", in: Vlieghe H. (ed.), *Van Dyck 1599–1999: Conjectures and Refutations* (Turnhout: 2001) 289–303.

34 XI. Boecken van L. Apuleivs Handelende vanden Gulden Esel Seer ghenoechlyck ende vermaeckelyck om leesen, ende den Schilderen, Poëten, oock Liefhebb'ren der inventien dienstich (Haarlem: 1636). Adlington William, *The xi Bookes of the Golden Asse [...] with an excellent narration of the Mariage of Cupide and Psiches* (London: Henry Wykes, 1566); Carver R.H.F., *The Protean Ass: The Metamorphoses of Apuleius from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Oxford: 2007); Gaisser J.H., *The Fortunes of Apuleius and the Golden Ass: A Study in Transmission and Reception* (Princeton – Oxford: 2008) 274, 288–293, 315–318; Kingsley-Smith J., *Cupid in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: 2010) 166–170.

Persephone to share a casket full of her beauty so that Venus could use it on herself. Persephone, however, placed a deadly potion in the casket, and when Psyche opened it, hoping to steal some of Persephone's beauty potion for her own use, she was cast into a poisonous sleep.

Van Dyck depicts the moment when Cupid arrives just in time to save his beloved from Persephone's spell. Wiping the sleep from her eyes, he will commandeer Mercury to carry Psyche off to Olympus, convince the gods of the righteousness of their love, and persuade Jupiter to render Psyche immortal so that their marriage can be solemnized in Heaven. When interpreting this scene in relation to conjugal love, it is important to remember that Apuleius casts Cupid and Psyche as already married from the moment Zephyr carried her to him. Throughout her trials, Psyche is already pregnant with Cupid's daughter, Pleasure. Thus, the story begins with erotic passion but ends in marriage and family.

The tale of Cupid and Psyche inspired paintings and prints throughout early modern Europe, but most artists chose to focus on either the moment when Psyche unveils the sleeping Cupid (treated with chaste reserve by Orazio Gentileschi in a painting for Charles I) or the triumphant celebration of their wedding (for instance, the masterful *Feast of the Gods* engraved by Goltzius after Bartholomeus Spranger).³⁵ Each of these scenes developed a visual tradition apart from narrative cycles recounting the full story, but Van Dyck's choice of the rescue as a subject by itself was highly unusual. How might this have been received at the Caroline court, and particularly by the king and queen?

In 1625, Charles I of England married Henrietta Maria, youngest daughter of Marie de'Medici and King Henry IV of France. Their union was negotiated to cement an alliance between their countries, but the efforts of Henrietta Maria and her advisors to restore acceptance for Roman Catholicism in England ultimately had disastrous consequences, contributing to Puritan unrest and the onset of the Civil War. Conflicting religious and political factions kept Charles and Henrietta Maria apart during the early years of their marriage, but following the assassination in 1628 of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, whose friendship and political schemes had occupied much of Charles' attention, the King grew closer to his wife, and their dynastic match became a love affair. The 1630s marked a period of relative calm in their marriage and their reign. During the personal rule of Charles I (1629–1640), six healthy children

35 Orazio Gentileschi, *Cupid and Psyche*, ca. 1617, Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg; Hendrick Goltzius after Bartholomeus Spranger, *The Feast of the Gods*, engraving, 1587.

were born to the royal couple, and the arts flourished at their court.³⁶ Masques and poems celebrated the peace of the realm and the happiness of the royal pair through allusions to various classic love stories, including that of Cupid and Psyche.³⁷

In "A Morall Poem, Intituled The Legend of Cupid and Psyche", Shakerly Marmion promotes marriage as the best way to contain Cupid's lustful nature (and, implicitly, that of men in general).³⁸ The poem was published with a dedication to Charles Louis, Elector Palatine, while he was resident at the English court in 1637; Van Dyck painted several portraits of the young nobleman, son of Charles' sister Elizabeth.³⁹ Marmion's dedication, like the poem itself, may well have been a play for royal favor, but by this time, political tensions were beginning to complicate relations between King Charles and his nephew, who later joined the parliamentarians.⁴⁰ More intimately connected with the royal milieu of Van Dyck's painting is Thomas Heywood's retelling of Cupid and

36 For a historical account grounded in primary documents, see Whitaker K., *A Royal Passion: The Turbulent Marriage of King Charles I of England and Henrietta Maria of France* (New York – London: 2010).

37 Veevers, *Images of Love* 14–33, 110–120.; Coiro A.B., "A ball of strife: Caroline poetry and royal marriage", in Corns T.N. (ed.), *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I* (Cambridge: 1999) 26–46; and Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid* 163–185. As a celebrated pair of lovers, Cupid and Psyche make an appearance in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (III. vi. 29–50) and in Milton's *A Mask presented at Ludlow Castle* (1634), known as *Comus* (lines 1004–1011); Marcus L.S., "John Milton's *Comus*", in Corns T.N. (ed.), *A Companion to Milton* (Oxford – Malden: 2001) 232–245, 243.

38 Jupiter sanctions Cupid's marriage to Psyche: "But that his lewd life be no farther spread, / His lusts, nor his corruptions published, / I hold it fit, that we the cause remove, / And bind him in the fetters of chaste love"; Marmion Shakerly, *A morall Poem, intituled the Legend of Cupid and Psyche. Or Cupid and his mistris. As it was lately presented to the Prince Elector* (London: N. and I. Okes, 1637); Nearing A.J., *Cupid and Psyche, by Shakerly Marmion—A Critical Edition: with an Account of Marmion's Life and Works* (Philadelphia: 1944) 164. Cf. Judy Egerton in Brown C. – Vlieghe H. (eds.) et al., *Van Dyck 1599–1641* [exh. cat. Antwerp: Museum voor Schone Kunsten, and London: Royal Academy of Arts] (London – Antwerp: 1999) 326; Wheelock A. et al., *Anthony Van Dyck* [exh. cat. Washington: National Gallery of Art] (Washington: 1990) 316; and Barnes et al., *Van Dyck* 431.

39 Anthony van Dyck, *Portrait of Charles Louis, Elector Palatine, and Prince Rupert*, 1637, Louvre, Paris; *Portrait of Charles Louis, Count Palatine*, 1637, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Barnes al., *Van Dyck* 485–488, Cat. IV.69 (Charles Louis in London November 1635–June 1637), Cat. IV.70; see also Cat. IV.71–72.

40 Wedgwood C.V., "King Charles's Nephew and the English Throne: The Elector Palatine and the Civil War", *History Today* 4, 1 (1954) 3–10; Butler M., "Entertaining the Palatine Prince: Plays on Foreign Affairs 1635–1637", *English Literary Renaissance* 13, 3 (1983) 319–344.

Psyche's story in *Love's Mistress, or The Queen's Masque*. Heywood's stageplay is based on Apuleius' *Golden Ass* but with many secondary characters and incidents added, often for comic effect. It was performed for Charles and Henrietta Maria in November 1634 first at the Phoenix Theater (the Cockpit) in Drury Lane, London, and then twice on the Queen's private stage in Denmark House, with set designs by Inigo Jones; one performance took place as an entertainment for the King's birthday (November 19). The script was published in 1636.⁴¹ Heywood's mythological farce, like many literary productions in his milieu, can be mined for allusions to contemporary circumstances. As Richard Rowland has shown, it encodes a witty critique of Caroline court culture, but it does so from an insider's perspective, and in a manner that must have amused the King and Queen, who watched it three times in eight days.⁴² When Heywood urges his courtly spectators "where ere you love, prove of one faith, one mind", he may well be alluding to the hope for resolution of tensions between Catholics and Protestants besetting the court.⁴³

The adventure with Persephone's box features in the final act of the play. Heywood's rendering interpolates humour with drama by introducing a Clown who seeks to steal Persephone's box but is foiled by Cupid. Yet, the mood softens into tenderness as Cupid encounters the sleeping Psyche:

But foolish girle, alas why blame I thee?
When all thy Sex is guilty of like pride,
And ever was? But where's this beauty now?
Turn'd into slumbers, and like watery pearles
Of honey-tasting dew hangs on these lids:
She wakes againe; I have swept off the slumber
That hung so heavy on these spotted covers,
Which once clos'd in, the light of all true lovers.⁴⁴

41 Heywood Thomas, *Love's Maistresse: or, The Queens Masque: As It was Three Times presented before Their Two Excellent Maiesties, within the Space of Eight Dayes [...]* (London, Robert Raworth for John Crouch: 1636). Rowland R., *Thomas Heywood's Theatre, 1599–1639: Locations, Translations, and Conflict* (Farnham – Burlington: 2010) 238–297; Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid* 170–183.

42 Rowland, *Thomas Heywood's Theater*, 238, 256, 283, 297.

43 Rowland, *Thomas Heywood's Theater* 286; Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid* 173. For Henrietta Maria's patronage, see also Veevers, *Images of Love*; Britland K., *Drama at the Courts of Henrietta Maria* (Cambridge 2006); and idem., "Queen Henrietta Maria's Theatrical Patronage", in Griffey, *Henrietta Maria* 56–72.

44 Heywood, *Love's Maistresse*, Act IV, Scene 1 n.p. Marmion, *A morall Poem*, following Heywood, has Cupid say: "... what wondrous frailty does possesse / This female kind,

Although this passage follows Apuleius quite closely, two elements are different. In the original text, Cupid simply rebukes Psyche for her curiosity,⁴⁵ while here, he chides himself for blaming her. He excuses her desire for Persephone's gift (Beauty) as a natural feminine (and human) inclination. Thus, Cupid may be drawn to Psyche by desire, but his decision to rescue her is moved by pity. While Heywood sets a light, romantic tone, we may read this passage in more spiritual terms as an expression of divine compassion for imperfect human-kind—in other words, *agape*.

Charles and Henrietta Maria commissioned paintings of Psyche's story by artists such as Peter Paul Rubens and Jacob Jordaens as well as Gentileschi and Van Dyck.⁴⁶ Charles gave Henrietta Maria possession of several properties including the Queen's House at Greenwich, designed in 1616 by Inigo Jones for Charles' mother, Anne of Denmark. Renovation and expansion of the building was completed under Henrietta Maria's direction in 1635, and in 1639, she (or the King) commissioned a cycle of twenty-two scenes from the story of Cupid and Psyche to decorate her Cabinet there. The commission was awarded to Jordaens with Balthasar Gerbier and Abbé Cesare Alessandro Scaglia serving as intermediaries. The painter was not told for what location the cycle was commissioned, but Inigo Jones instructed Jordaens that the culminating scene was to represent Psyche welcomed at the court of Jupiter on Mount Olympus—a theme consonant with the hopes of Charles and Henrietta Maria that the foreign-born, Catholic Queen would find acceptance as the consort of the English sovereign. Eight paintings, now lost, were sent from Jordaens' studio in Antwerp before the project was cancelled.⁴⁷

or rather wilfulnesse? / For loe, thy foolish curiosity, / Hath tempted thee againe to perjury ..."; Nearing, *Cupid and Psyche* 161.

- 45 'Ecce', inquit, 'Rursum perieras, misella, simili curiositate.' In Adlington's translation: "O wretched caytife, beholde thou wearest welny perished againe, with the ouermuch curiositie"; Adlington, *Golden Asse* VI 62–63. Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid* 168, and Gaisser, *Fortunes of Apuleius* 289–290, note that Adlington downplays the novel's comic and erotic potential in favor of moral edification.
- 46 Rubens' *Mercury conducting Psyche to Olympus* (oil sketch for lost or uncompleted painting, Liechtenstein Collection, Vaduz) may allude to Charles' failed "Spanish match" or his betrothal to Henrietta Maria; Buckingham features as Mercury; Held J.S., *The Oil Sketches of Peter Paul Rubens*, 2 vols. (Princeton: 1980) I 187–192, Cat. 129; Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid* 173; Rowlands, *Thomas Heywood's Theater* 289.
- 47 Schlugleit D., "L'Abbé Scaglia, Jordaens et l' 'Histoire de Psyché' de Greenwich-House", *Revue Belge d'Archéologie et Histoire de l'Art* (1937) 139–165; D'Hulst R.A., *Jacob Jordaens* (Ithaca: 1982) 26; Van de Velde C., "Painters and Patrons in Antwerp in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", Vlieghe H. et al. (eds.), *Concept, Design and Execution in Flemish*

Cupid and Psyche [Fig. 9.2] is the only known depiction of the story by Van Dyck. Its relationship to the Jordaens commission remains unclear, but it has been dated stylistically to 1638–1640.⁴⁸ This was a period when political and religious strife increasingly claimed the attention of both king and queen.⁴⁹ The dreamy, romantic air of Van Dyck's painting seems attuned to the halcyon mood of the 1630s, not the painful period that followed. In 1640, Van Dyck himself found it prudent to begin seeking commissions abroad; he died the following year.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the commission to Jordaens was underway by mid-November 1639, but the first painting did not arrive until May 1640.⁵¹ The royal preference for an elevated, poetic tone is exemplified in Gerbier's warning "not to seeke to represent robustrous boistrous druncken headed imaginary Gods".⁵² Whether or not Caroline connoisseurs were pleased with Jordaens' robust style, shifting political and financial circumstances may explain why the extensive pictorial cycle was never completed.

Painting, 1550–1700 (Turnhout: 2000) 29–42, esp. 37–40; Merle Du Bourg A. et al., *Jordaens 1593–1678* [exh. cat., Petit Palais, Paris] (Paris: 2013) 20; Rowland, *Thomas Heywood's Theater* 288–289; and Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid*, 173.

- 48 Jordaens' series was to include the same subject, and a note from Van Dyck to the King in 1638 references "Une piece pour la Maison a Green Witz", but Van Dyck's painting is listed ca. 1639 in Abraham van der Doort's inventory of the royal collection as unframed and hanging in the Long Gallery at Whitehall. Millar O., "Abraham van der Doort's Catalogue of the Collection of Charles I", *Walpole Society* 37 (1960) 1–243, p. 4; Millar O., *Van Dyck in England* [exh. cat., National Portrait Gallery, London] (London: 1982) 97–98; Egerton in Brown and Vlieghe, *Van Dyck* 326, 329; Wheelock et al., *Van Dyck* 316 (dating it 1639–40); Barnes et al., *Van Dyck* 431 (ca. 1638–1639).
- 49 Watson D.R., *The Life and Times of Charles I* (London: 1972) 74–99; Whitaker, *A Royal Passion*, 114–240; and Sharpe K., *Reading Authority and Representing Rule in Early Modern England* (London – New York: 2013) 146–148.
- 50 Van Dyck traveled to Antwerp and Paris twice in 1640–41; he died in London in December 1641; Barnes et al., *Van Dyck* 11–12.
- 51 Howarth D., "The Entry Books of Sir Balthazar Gerbier: Van Dyck, Charles I and the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand", Vlieghe (ed.), *Conjectures and Refutations* 77–87, pp. 79–80, citing letter from Gerbier to Scaglia, 14 November 1639. The first painting to arrive was 'Psyche consoled by Pan' (sketch in Stedelijk Prentenkabinet, Antwerp); Bold J., *Greenwich: The Architectural History of the Royal Hospital for Seamen and the Queen's House* (New Haven – London: 2000) 59–61, 74–76; Kingsley Smith, *Cupid* 228 n. 33; Van de Velde, "Painters and Patrons," 39, fig. 18; Merle Du Bourg, *Jordaens* 203.
- 52 Howarth, "The Entry Books" 79–80; Rowland, *Thomas Heywood's Theater* 288–289; Egerton in Brown and Vlieghe, *Van Dyck* 326, 329.

Cupid's rush to Psyche as depicted by Van Dyck has been associated with the Platonic concept of Love as Desire Moved by Beauty.⁵³ Here, Beauty is literally embodied in Psyche herself. Passively available to the viewer's gaze, she recalls recumbent figures such as Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus* and, as such, participates in a long tradition celebrating the eroticized female nude as synonymous not only with Beauty, but also with Art itself—in the words of the Dutch theorist Arnold Houbraken (1718), "the most glorious subject of the artist's brush."⁵⁴ As I have argued elsewhere, the male viewer of the seductive nude gains not only a frisson of sexual arousal but also an affirmation of his own self-worth: by seeing and desiring the image of a beautiful woman, he affirms both his masculine potency and his own good taste.⁵⁵ In the case of *Cupid and Psyche*, however, the likelihood that Queen Henrietta Maria was one of the primary viewers imagined by the artist situates the commission outside the typical masculine compact. Female spectatorship remains insufficiently examined, but it is worth noting that in Cupid (sometimes depicted as a pudgy toddler), Van Dyck has created an equally seductive rendering of the male physique.⁵⁶ The tactile interplay of smooth flesh and shimmering drapery heightens the sensuous appeal of both figures.⁵⁷ At the same time, Van Dyck adds narrative content and emotional depth through subtle adjustments to these idealized forms. Cupid's

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- 53 Parry G., *The Golden Age Restor'd: The Culture of the Stuart Court, 1603–42* (Manchester: 1981) 196–197; Wheelock et al., *Van Dyck* 315; Egerton in Brown and Vlieghe, *Van Dyck* 326; and Millar in Barnes et al., *Van Dyck* 431.
- 54 Giorgione, *Sleeping Venus*, ca. 1508–1510, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Berlin. Houbraken, *Groote Schouburgh* 261. Egerton nicely distinguishes Van Dyck's Psyche by the pathos of her "utter vulnerability"; Brown and Vlieghe et al., *Van Dyck* 326.
- 55 Dickey S.S., "Damsels in Distress: Gender and Emotion in Seventeenth-century Netherlandish Art", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 60 (2010) 53–81; Dickey S.S., "Disgust and Desire: Responses to Rembrandt's Nudes", Cashion D. – Luttihuisen H. – West A. (eds.), *The Primacy of the Image in Northern European Art, 1400–1700: Essays in Honor of Larry Silver* (Leiden: 2017) 447–460.
- 56 Millar in Barnes et al., *Van Dyck* 431, notes that Cupid's golden hair, flushed cheeks, and soft, white wings echo descriptions in Apuleius. For female spectatorship in the English theater see Marsden J.I., *Fatal Desire: Women, Sexuality, and the English Stage, 1660–1720* (Ithaca – London: 2006) 17–60. For the infantile version of Cupid, see, for instance, Jacob Jordaens, *The Love of Cupid and Psyche*, 1644, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp. The casting of Cupid as a young boy posed problems in theatrical staging of the myth as well; Rowland, *Thomas Heywood's Theater* 233, 248–249.
- 57 Van Dyck's sensuous conjunctions of fabric and flesh resonate with Caroline poems such as Robert Herrick's "Upon Julia's Clothes"; Parry G., "Van Dyck and the Caroline Court Poets," Barnes S.J. – Wheelock A.K., Jr. (eds.), *Van Dyck* 350 (Washington – Hanover – London: 1994) 247–262, p. 255; and Gordenker E.E.S., *Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641) and*

approach is cautious, gentle, and his face registers his concern. The uncomfortable angle of Psyche's head conveys her helpless unconsciousness (Apuleius describes her as "like a sleeping corpse"⁵⁸), while the awkward bend of her right arm calls attention to her limp hand, still resting on the opened casket. These sensitive details prompt a more nuanced reading of the action.

Psyche can stand for Beauty, but also for the human soul. In Heywood's play, Cupid represents not carnal lust but "true desire, [who] Doates on the Soules sweet beauty".⁵⁹ In Van Dyck's painting, Psyche is poised on the verge of death, but, thanks to Cupid's timely intervention, she will achieve immortality.⁶⁰ In descending to her aid, he demonstrates the selfless compassion of God for humankind: *eros* is enriched by *agape*. This scene thus constitutes the moment in the narrative best chosen to balance its erotic content with more spiritual implications. And that may well be why Van Dyck (or his patrons) selected it.

At the Caroline court, Henrietta Maria herself was elegized as the personification of beauty that inspires desire—not lust, but desire for universal harmony and virtue. Royal monogamy and fecundity (producing the first viable heir to the throne since the mid-sixteenth century) and the gentle feminism encoded in the French queen's promotion of *honnêteté* provided the foundation for this utopian vision. Her evident interest in Psyche's story may reflect a measure of self-identification with the theme of love triumphing over adversity. It is likely she was also aware of its spiritual connotations, since she has been credited with introducing Neoplatonism to the English court through French texts such as Honoré d'Urfée's *L'Astrée* (1607–1627–??) and François de Sales' *Traité de l'amour de Dieu* (1616).⁶¹ Erica Veevers has persuasively argued that court masques under Henrietta Maria's patronage "presented a type of drama in which mutual love and marriage were the ideal" and "in which Platonic love was interpreted as Christian charity".⁶²

the Representation of Dress in Seventeenth-Century Portraiture (Turnhout: 2001) 7–26, esp. 19–20.

58 "quam dormiens cadaver"; noted by Oppé P., "Sir Anthony Van Dyck in England", *Burlington Magazine* 79 (1941) 186–191, p. 189; Barnes et al., *Van Dyck* 431.

59 Heywood, *Love's Maistrisse* sig. D2r; Rowland, *Thomas Heywood's Theater* 249. Marmion, too, identifies Psyche as 'the soule', while her evil sisters represent 'flesh' and 'will'; Nearing, *Cupid and Psyche* 104.

60 Gaisser, *Fortunes of Apuleius* 110–121. For the Puritan response, see Sensabaugh G.F., "Platonic Love and the Puritan Rebellion", *Studies in Philology* 37, 2 (1940) 457–481; and Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid* 163–166, 174.

61 Veevers, *Images of Love* 2–3, 16–26; Coiro, "Ball of strife" 27; Rowland, *Thomas Heywood's Theater* 189; and Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid* 173–174.

62 Veevers, *Images of Love* 3.

Behind Psyche, Van Dyck juxtaposes a flourishing tree with a dead one, potentially alluding to Psyche's liminal state. A key element here is the vine twining around the dessicated trunk. The motif of a vine that clings to a tree even after death, as illustrated by Andrea Alciati and other emblematicists, came to stand for marriage and eternal fidelity; it has been identified as such in portraits of married couples by Jacob Jordaens and Frans Hals.⁶³ Thus, this motif adds weight to the reading of Van Dyck's painting as a celebration of conjugal love in all its complexity: the erotic allure of beauty transformed into a more spiritual and enduring bond.

Van Dyck's alighting Cupid fits the generic profile of a hero dashing to the rescue of a woman in distress; we may think, for instance, of Perseus saving Andromeda, a familiar theme in Van Dyck's (and Rembrandt's) milieu.⁶⁴ This well-established pictorial type may, in fact, have contributed to his formulation of *Cupid and Psyche*. With this visual analogy in mind, I come back to the affinity with Rembrandt's double portrait. My inquiry began with a simple but powerful compositional formula: a pair of lovers, one moving urgently to aid

63 Alciati Andrea, "Amicitia etiam post mortem durans", *Clarissimi Viri D. Andreae Alciati Emblematum Libellus* [...] (Paris, Wechel: 1542) 40, Emblem x11. Jacob Jordaens, *Portrait of a Married Couple*, ca. 1622, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Oppé, "Sir Anthony van Dyck" 188; Wood J., "Van Dyck's Pictures for the Duke of Buckingham: The Elephant in the Carpet and the Dead Tree with Ivy", *Apollo* 36 (1992) 37–47, esp. 43–44; Brown and Vlieghe et al., *Van Dyck* 326; Royalton-Kisch M. *The Light of Nature. Landscape Drawings and Watercolours by Van Dyck and his Contemporaries* [exh. cat. London: British Museum and Antwerp: Rubenshuis] (London: 1999) 22; Barnes et al., *Van Dyck* 431. Frans Hals, *Portrait of Isaac Massa and Beatrix van der Laan*, 1622, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; De Jongh E. and Vinken P.J., "Frans Hals als voortzetter van een emblematische traditie. Bij het Huwelijksportret van Isaac Massa en Beatrix van der Laen", *Oud Holland* 76 (1961) 117–152, esp. 118–129, citing Alciati and other sources including Shakespeare (Adriana to Antipholus in *Comedy of Errors* 11, 2: "Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine ..."); Slive S. et al., *Frans Hals* [exh. cat. London: Royal Academy of Arts] (Brussels 1989) 162–165. On Van Dyck and Hals see recently Tummers A. and Clippel K. De, *Frans Hals Eye to Eye with Rembrandt, Rubens and Titian* [exh. cat. Haarlem: Frans Hals Museum] (Haarlem 2013) 37, 41, 50.

64 Painted by numerous Flemish artists including Rubens (several times) and Van Dyck (painting now lost); for the latter, see Roland M., "Review of McNairn A., *The Young Van Dyck*", *Art Bulletin* 64, 4 (1982) 669–672, p. 71, n. 7. In *Andromeda chained to the Rocks* (ca. 1630, Mauritshuis, The Hague) Rembrandt omits Perseus, inviting the viewer to assume the role of hero, and solicits compassion by humanizing the female form; Sluijter, *Female Nude* 89–100; Dickey, "Damsels in Distress" 58–59. In his introductory "Argument", Marmion compares Psyche with Andromeda; Nearing, *Cupid and Psyche* 102–103.

the other. What I perceive are two distinct applications—albeit with gender roles reversed—of a motif that we may call ‘the rush to the beloved’. Beauty, youth, and passion in one case, workaday old age in the other: one is poetry, the other prose. Yet, *agape* and its human expression, *caritas*, create a conceptual and formal link between these two seemingly disparate compositions. Both are built on a dynamic play of diagonal movements, and both balance active and passive, movement and stasis, delivery and receipt. Most important for our theme is the underlying force that drives the action in both images: love—and selfless, conjugal love at that. Both works were created for patrons whose close marital relationship surely blended *eros* with *caritas*.

Both Griet and Psyche are messengers, and this suggests a serendipitous parallel between Griet’s letter, briskly delivered, and Psyche’s box, arrested in transit by curiosity and the casting of a spell. Like the box, the letter is a portentous container, bearing within it the future—for, once it is opened, something must change. The constructions of femininity represented by Griet Jans and by Psyche are as divergent as they are familiar: age and moral probity on one hand, youth and vain frivolity on the other. Griet, the virtuous housewife, does the right thing in hastening to her husband. Psyche embodies human fallibility when she gives way to curiosity and temptation. And yet, the gods forgive her. By figuring the rush to the beloved, in which self is set aside in service to another, both paintings contribute to an understanding of Christian *caritas* in its conjugal form: as an earthly conduit of the limitless love of God for humankind.

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Vermeer's *Milkmaid* in the Discourse of Love

H. Rodney Nevitt, Jr.

Some years ago in Amsterdam I purchased a seventeenth-century Dutch tile decorated with a figure of Cupid holding his bow and arrow [Fig. 10.1]. It reminded me of the well-known Cupid tile in Johannes Vermeer's *The Milkmaid* of ca. 1657–1658, visible between the milkmaid's skirt and the foot warmer [Figs. 10.2 & 10.3]. The Cupids are posed similarly, though my Cupid has his left foot forward, and Vermeer's, his right.¹ Of the two tiles to the right of the foot warmer, the first depicts a man with a walking stick, while the one at the right edge of the picture seems illegible; of the three, Cupid is most emphatically in focus. Cupids appear in other paintings by Vermeer, for example his *Lady Standing at the Virginal* of ca. 1670–1672, which includes the framed painting of Cupid on the wall and a tile of Cupid fishing (a metaphor for amorous pursuit) to the left of her skirt [Fig. 10.4].² Here the multiple Cupid references, the

* I was delighted when Walter Liedtke asked if he could borrow my tile, discussed here, for the exhibition of *The Milkmaid* at the Metropolitan Museum in 2009. I had met Walter when I was a fellow at the Met, and he became aware of the tile when I published it in Nevitt, Jr. H.R., "Vermeer on the Question of Love", in Franits W. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Vermeer* (Cambridge: 2001) 101, fig. 42. The subject of Vermeer also reminds me of my time as an intern at the National Gallery, under the benevolent supervision of Arthur Wheelock. My approach to *The Milkmaid* draws insights from both of my Vermeer mentors, and so I dedicate this essay in memory of Walter Liedtke, and with much gratitude to Arthur Wheelock. I began concerted research on *The Milkmaid* in 2004 while on a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend, and continued it in fall 2013 during a Faculty Development Leave from the University of Houston; I am grateful to both institutions for their support. I would also like to thank Walter Melion, Joanna Woodall, and Michael Zell for inviting me to participate in the Lovis Corinth Colloquium at Emory.

- 1 My Cupid and Vermeer's are perhaps related to each other in some highly indirect way. In Liedtke W., *The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer* [exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York] (New York: 2009) 14, fig. 15, my tile is described as 'late 17th century'. I fondly prefer '17th century' to leave open the possibility that it was *the* tile.
- 2 On Cupids and Vermeer, see Nevitt, Jr. H.R., "Vermeer on the Question of Love" 97–103, and for more on love and fishing, see idem, "Rembrandt's Hidden Lovers", in Falkenburg R. et al. (eds.), *Natuur en landschap in de Nederlandse kunst 1500–1800*, *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 48 (1997) 167–170.



FIGURE 10.1 Blue and White Delft Tile with Cupid, *seventeenth century*. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. H. Rodney Nevitt, Jr.

IMAGE © MR. AND MRS. H. RODNEY NEVITT, JR. PHOTO: JOSEPH LAZZARO.

elegant lady—a Petrarchan object of desire—the musical theme, the pastoral landscapes, the implied scenario in which she seems to wait for an admirer to take the chair before her: all this defines the erotic ambience. But what kind of love is at issue in *The Milkmaid*? The question really began, for me, with my tile.

The Cupid tile in *The Milkmaid* has been related to the adjacent foot warmer ('stoof' or 'stoofje' in Dutch), the wooden box with its earthenware bowl in which hot coals might be placed on a cold winter's day. Such foot warmers are used by a variety of women (and it is almost always women) in Dutch paintings: a tipsy housewife by Jan Steen, a nursing mother by Pieter de Hooch, even



FIGURE 10.2 *Johannes Vermeer, The Milkmaid, ca. 1657–1658. Oil on canvas, 45.5 × 41 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.*

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.

the Virgin Mary herself in Rembrandt's *Holy Family*.³ That said, they do appear frequently in representations of amatory scenes, for example in Jacob van Loo's

3 Jan Steen, *'As the Old Sing, So Pipe the Young'*, ca. 1668–1670, oil on canvas, 134 × 163 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague; Pieter de Hooch, *A Woman Nursing an Infant with a Child and a Dog*, ca. 1658–1660, oil on canvas, 67.8 × 55.6 cm, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Palace of the Legion of Honor; Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Holy Family with Angels*, 1645, oil on canvas, 117 × 91 cm, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.



FIGURE 10.3 *Johannes Vermeer, The Milkmaid, ca. 1657–1658. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Detail.*

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.

painting of a courting couple of ca. 1650 [Fig. 10.5]. Here the lady with the foot warmer seems to have put her sewing aside to listen to her suitor's entreaties. Wayne Franits has compared Van Loo's painting to the emblem from Roemer Visscher's *Sinnepoppen* of 1614, 'Mignon des Dames' (Favorite of the Ladies), also cited frequently in the literature on *The Milkmaid* [Fig. 10.6].⁴ Visscher

4 Franits W., *Paragons of Virtue: Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* (Cambridge: 1993) 47–51, and idem, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting* (New Haven – London: 2004) 176–177.



FIGURE 10.4 *Johannes Vermeer, Lady Standing at a Virginal, ca. 1670–1672. Oil on canvas, 51.7 × 45.2 cm. National Gallery, London.*

IMAGE © THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON.

whimsically holds up the foot warmer as a model of imitation for young men seeking to win favour with their ladies:

A foot warmer with fire therein is a beloved jewel with our Dutch women, especially when the snowflakes fall [...] He that wishes to strive for the second place of honour with such persons [Dutch women] will serve her [his beloved] with sweet, amusing and pleasurable talk, avoiding all



FIGURE 10.5 *Jacob van Loo, Wooing, ca. 1650. Oil on canvas, 73.3 × 60.8 cm. Mauritshuis, The Hague.*

IMAGE © MAURITSHUIS, THE HAGUE.

vulgarities, [...] but praising all that she does and says, and then he, in her company, will be judged a perfect courtier.⁵

5 Visscher Roemer, *Sinnepoppen* (Amsterdam, Willem Iansz.: 1614), Sect. 3, emblem LVI 178: 'Mignon des Dames/ Een Stoof met vier daer in, is een bemint luweel by onse Hollantsche Vrouwen, bysonder als de Sneeu-vlocken vliegghen, en de Haghel ende Rijk het lof van de boomen jaecht: die dan by henlieden de tweeden plaetse van gheacht te wesen wil bejaghen, die moet hem stellen om haer te dienen met een soete boertighe, vermaerckelijcke prate,

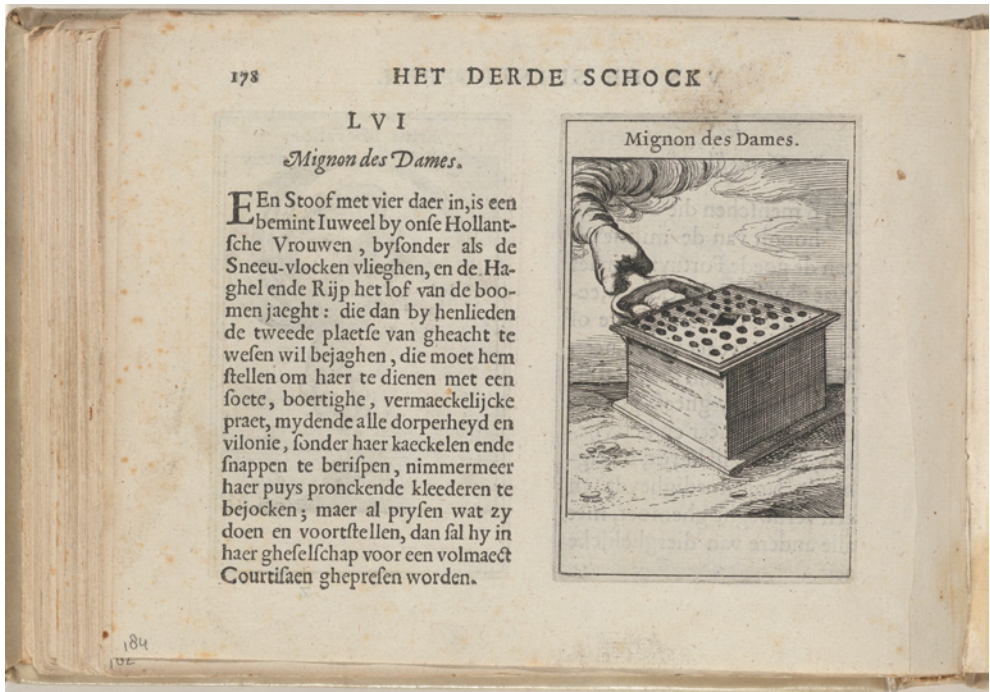


FIGURE 10.6 *Illustration, Mignon des Dames, engraving, 136 × 188 mm. In Roemer Visscher, Sinnepoppen (Amsterdam, Willem Iansz.: 1614), emblem LVI, Derde Schock. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.*

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.

Other Dutch texts associate foot warmers with love. Johannes van Dans's court-
ing manual, *Scoperos satyra ofte Thyrsis minne-wit* of 1636, features an illustration
of a social gathering with one man stoking his lady's foot warmer with
coals, and the associated text, 'The burning of Maidens lies hidden,/ The coals
exist in the heart, [...].'⁶ In his moralizing satire of youth, *De Hollandsche-Liis*,

mydende alle dorperheyd en vilonie, sonder haer kaeckelen ende snappen to berispen, nimmermeer haer puys pronckende kleederen to bejocken; maer al prysen wat zy doen en voortstellen, dan sal hy in haer gheselschap voor een volmaect Courtisaen ghepresen worden'.

6 [Dans Johannes van], *Scoperos satyra ofte Thyrsis minne-wit* (Leiden, publisher unknown: 1636) 47: 'Maeghden-brandt die leydt verholten,/ In het hert bestaen de Kolen,/ [...]' with the illustration on 42.

met de Brabandsche-Bely of 1629, Gillis Jacobsz. Quintijn rails against young people whose parties go on so late that, running out of firewood, they toss their foot warmers into the fire, which is represented in an accompanying illustration.⁷ In Van Loo's painting, the pair's interaction is decorous, but the servant is taking his leave, and a viewer such as Quintijn might have been alarmed at the sight of the bed on the left.

Foot warmers are used frequently by young women sewing, another example being Judith Leyster's painting *The Proposition*, dated 1631, in which the man offers the woman a handful of coins, perhaps in exchange for sex or, more likely, marriage.⁸ Jacob Cats praised sewing as a domestic skill for young women.⁹ Leyster's figure displays her virtue by concentrating on her sewing and ignoring the man's unwanted advance. Sewing was a domestic virtue, but was also thought thereby to attract suitors, and sewing sessions were pretexts for the (it was hoped, polite) mixing of the sexes.¹⁰ Vermeer's *Milkmaid* is engaged in kitchen work rather than sewing, but infrared photography reveals that Vermeer had originally painted what was probably a sewing or laundry basket in the lower right, and later replaced it with the foot warmer and base-board of tiles.¹¹

7 See Quintijn Gillis Jacobsz., *De Hollandsche-Liis Met de Brabandsche-Bely* (The Hague, J. Ockertsz.: 1629) 118: 'Daer na gaense banketeren,/ Ende smeren,/ Tot het, worde lichten dag;/ Rust en slaep is dan vervlogen/ Wt haer ogen,/ In dat Smulle-buys-gelag./ Dan gaen dese reppe-handen/Stove-branden;/ Sick te warmen by dat vier:/ Mits komt Ian de Nar gelopen,/ Vol gesopen,/ Gribbe-grabben naer een Dier [...]': The illustration by Adriaen Matham after Adriaen Pietersz. van de Venne is on 119.

8 Judith Leyster, *The Proposition*, 1631, oil on panel, 31 × 24 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague. On this painting, see Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting* 50–51; and the discussion by Kortenhorst-von Bogendorf Rupprath C. in Welu J. – Biesboer P. (eds.), *Judith Leyster: A Dutch Master and Her World* [exh. cat., Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem; Worcester Art Museum, Worcester] (Zwolle: 1993) 168–173, no. 8. On the theme of unequal lovers, see Stewart A.G., *Unequal Lovers: A Study of Unequal Couples in Northern Art* (New York: 1978).

9 E.g., the engraved title page, "Maeghde-Wapen", in Cats Jacob, *Houwelyck* (Middelburgh, Jan Pietersz. vande Venne: 1625) 1***ij, with the maiden on the left holding her needle-work. On this image and on sewing as a domestic virtue, see also Franits, *Paragons of Virtue* 21–36, 47–48.

10 See Franits, *Paragons of Virtue* 33–36, and 46 (for another painting by Van Loo, fig. 30, and an eighteenth-century catchpenny print, figs. 31, 31a, 31b, both of which show young men attending ladies' group sewing sessions).

11 Liedtke, *The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer*, figs. 12 and 11–12.

Foot warmers were also frequent accompaniments to the 'Lovesick Maiden' (or 'Doctor's Visit') theme in genre paintings. A painting by Samuel van Hoogstraten of ca. 1670 shows a distressed-looking young woman sitting with a foot warmer, while her doctor and husband (or father?) examine a flask of her urine [Fig. 10.7]. As Laurinda Dixon has shown, such paintings reflected beliefs in female hysteria and the 'wandering womb' that was thought to present such a danger to young women who were sexually mature but unmarried, or not having sufficient sex with their husbands.¹² Such women were overheated in humoral terms, yet their symptoms included chills: hence the foot warmers which, at the same time, probably function in the paintings as references to the heat of desire.¹³ The only remedy was sex, and even better, pregnancy, which was considered especially effective in stabilizing the womb.¹⁴ Another painting by Van Hoogstraten, dated 1670, likely a pendant to the one just cited, seems to show the same young woman as a mother with an infant and accompanied by an older woman, suggesting a progression from lovesick hysteria to maternal bliss [Fig. 10.8].¹⁵ Several paintings by Jan Steen have little Cupid sculptures among the décor; sometimes the Cupid and the foot warmer are on the same side of the composition, somewhat on the order of Vermeer's visual linking of the motifs in *The Milkmaid*, though not as closely juxtaposed.¹⁶ Such paintings as these by Leyster, Van Hoogstraten, and Steen, however, articulate amatory narratives (albeit loosely structured) in which one can read the foot warmers as references to desire, unlike the more enigmatic *Milkmaid*, in which Vermeer may have deemed it necessary to place the Cupid tile next to the foot warmer to activate the latter's latent amatory meaning.

The foot warmer has led us to genre paintings involving mostly women of a higher social class than *The Milkmaid*; Walter Liedtke, by contrast, placed

12 On Van Hoogstraten's painting, see Dixon L.S., *Perilous Chastity: Women and Illness in Pre-Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Ithaca: 1995) 67–72.

13 Ibid., 103–107.

14 Ibid., 159–167.

15 Brusati C., *Artifice and Illusion: The Art and Writing of Samuel van Hoogstraten* (Chicago – London: 1995) 357, no. 62, notes that both paintings were in the estate of Elisabeth Françoise Pauw in 1760, which suggests they were meant as a pair; Van Hoogstraten had painted portraits of the Pauw family in 1671.

16 E.g., Jan Steen, *The Lovesick Maiden*, ca. 1661–1663, oil on canvas, 61 × 52 cm, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich; and Jan Steen, *The Sick Girl*, ca. 1663–1665, oil on canvas, 58 × 46.5 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague.



FIGURE 10.7 Samuel van Hoogstraten, *The Doctor's Visit*, ca. 1670. Oil on canvas, 69.5 × 55 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.

Vermeer's painting in the tradition of milkmaids as sexualized types, for example, the engraving by Andries Stock after Jacques de Gheyn II, *The Milkmaid and the Crossbowman*, ca. 1610, with its inscription that jokes about 'milking' and the action of the crossbow ('shooting your bolt') as references to ejaculation, one of a number of milkmaid prints with leering visual and verbal puns



FIGURE 10.8 *Samuel van Hoogstraten, Two Women by a Cradle, 1670. Oil on canvas, 66 × 54.4 cm. Michele and Donald D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, Massachusetts, The James Philip Gray Collection.*

PHOTO: DAVID STANSBURY.

[Fig. 10.9].¹⁷ Rembrandt's etching *The Monk in the Cornfield* of ca. 1646 goes even further in featuring a milkmaid who has dispensed with word play.¹⁸

Alongside cultural stereotypes of milkmaids, of course, there was a social reality. Townspeople who wanted milk generally bought it at market from peasant women—milkmaids—who carried it in from outlying farms. Nicolaes Maes did several paintings in Dordrecht in the 1650s that seem to document a door-to-door delivery system [Fig. 10.10]. Here the milkmaid has set down her yoke and pails, has poured the milk into a bowl for the elderly housewife, and now receives payment. The city gate in the background points to the linkage of city and country that the milkmaid embodies. This milkmaid seems earnest and dutiful. Similarly, in a poem by Jacob Cats of 1656, 'Een Melck-meysje spreeckt', the milkmaid presents herself as self-sufficient and happy with her lot: 'Though I appear burdened with a yoke,/ I may go about freely;/ Since it fits my body well,/ It does not bother me [...] / I step with as sprightly a foot as a court lady [...]'¹⁹ Another painting by Maes, the so-called *Rustic Lovers* of ca. 1658–1659, however, shows a milkmaid dallying with a farm lad.²⁰ Virtuous milkmaids then were conceivable, but perhaps outnumbered—in paintings and prints, at least—by the tarts.

Of course, Vermeer's milkmaid is not, strictly speaking, or at least not clearly, a milkmaid, but a woman pouring milk, probably a kitchen maid ('keuken-meid'), which seems reflected in the earliest reference to the painting, in the

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- 17 On the erotics of milkmaids, see Liedtke, *The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer* 13–17, who also cites Lucas van Leyden's engraving, dated 1510, of a male peasant resting one hand on a phallic-looking tree stump while he stares intently at a milkmaid, and the illustrative print of a milkmaid with an accompanying obscene text (again, the milking pun) in the anonymous volume *Nova poemata: Nieuwe Nederduytsche gedichten ende raedtselen*, printed in Leiden in 1624.
- 18 Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Monk in the Cornfield*, ca. 1646, etching, 51 × 69 mm., cited in Liedtke, *The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer* 15.
- 19 Cats Jacob, *Invallende gedachten, op voorvallende geleghentheden* (Amsterdam, Jan Jacobsz. Schipper: 1656) 2–3: 'Een Melck-meysje spreeckt.// Al schijn ick, met een jock, bela[d]en,/ Noch mach ick vry daer henen gaen;/ Want mits het op mijn leden past,/ Soo streckt het my tot geen en last;/ Ick draegh' het na de rechte maet,/ Gelijckmen hier te lande gaet;/ Ick trede met soo rappen voet,/ Gelijck een Hofsche Iuffer doet./ En waerom ben ick niet soo vry,/ En waerom niet soo wel als sy./ Ick draegh het jock van mijn bedrijf,/ En sy een yser om het lijf./ Hoort, kinders, hoort een rustigh woort,/ En seght het vry de bureen voort;/ Wil yemant dragen eenigh pack,/ En dat oock sonder ongemack,/ Die grijp het wel van aenbegin,/ En draegh 'et met een luchten sin;/ Want al wat yemant willigh doet,/ Al is 'et suur, soo wort 'et soet'.
- 20 Nicolaes Maes, *Rustic Lovers*, ca. 1658–1659, oil on wood, 69.8 × 90.3 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art, John G. Johnson Collection.



FIGURE 10.9 *Andries Stock after Jacques de Gheyn II, The Archer and the Milkmaid, ca. 1610. Engraving, 41.4 × 32.8 cm. British Museum, London.*
 IMAGE © TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.



FIGURE 10.10 Nicolaes Maes, *The Milkwoman*, ca. 1655–1659. Oil on canvas, 57.5 × 66.6 cm. English Heritage, The Wellington Collection, Apsley House, London.
IMAGE © V & A IMAGES, LONDON / ART RESOURCE, NY.

Dissius auction of 1696, where it is described not as a milkmaid but as ‘A Maid who pours out milk, outstandingly good [...]’ (*‘Een Meyd di Melk uytgiet, uytnemende goet [...]’*).²¹ ‘Meyd’ distinguishes her from Vermeer’s ‘Juffrouwen’ (‘Ladies’)—the term reserved for upper-class women [Fig. 10.4].²² The Dutch

21 On the Dissius auction, see Blankert A. (with Ruurs R. and Van de Watering W.L.), *Vermeer of Delft* (Oxford: 1978) 153. The 1701 inventory of the buyer, Isaac Rooleeuw, similarly lists it as ‘A little Milk Poured’ (*‘Een Melkuytgietstertie’*): see Broos B., “Un celebre Peijntre nommé Verme[e]r”, in Wheelock, Jr. A.K. (ed.), *Johannes Vermeer* [exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Mauritshuis, The Hague] (Washington, D.C. – The Hague: 1995) 54 and fig. 8.

22 On *juffrouw* and *juffer*, see Blankert A., “Vermeer’s Modern Themes and Their Tradition”, in Wheelock, Jr. A.K. (ed.), *Johannes Vermeer* [exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Mauritshuis, The Hague] (Washington, D.C. – The Hague: 1995) 32–33.

'Meyd', like its English cognate, could refer to a servant but also to an unmarried young woman of any social class, with the possible exception of the obviously upper-class 'Juffrouwen'. 'Dienstmeyd', 'dienstmeisje' and 'dienstmaagd' ('maidservant or servant girl') were also common usages.²³ By the time of the Van Hoek auction in 1719, the title of Vermeer's painting had gelled: there it was proclaimed as 'The renowned Milkmaid of Vermeer of Delft, artful' ('Het vermaerde Melkmeysje door Vermeer van Delft, konstig').²⁴ A woman pouring milk was indeed a rare subject: the milk, precisely because it was both conspicuous and iconographically unusual, may have nudged the painting, in the minds of its early viewers, into the category of milkmaids.²⁵

Maidservants appear regularly in popular farces (*kluchten*) and paintings as shiftless young women intent on evading their chores and consorting with men, such as Gerard Dou's low-necklined *Kitchen Maid* of 1652 who seems more interested in what lies outside her window than in preparing the fish [Fig. 10.11].²⁶ The maid is surrounded by food with sexual connotations—the cock, the hare—and the relief below, with Venus and putti, accents the erotic tone.²⁷ In Nicolaes Maes's *Eavesdropper* of 1657, the smiling housewife invites us to join her in spying on her maid, whom we see in the background strolling with a man while the cat licks the bowl in the kitchen.²⁸ And sometimes the maid is simply lazy, as in Maes's *Idle Servant* of 1655 (here the cat makes off

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- 23 See, e.g., Sarnowiec M., "De zeven zonden van het dienstmeisje: een moralistische en libertijnse verse beschreven en verbeeld," in Bostoen K. et al. (eds.), *'Tweelinge eenen dragt': woord en beeld in de Nederlanden (1500–1750), De Zeventiende Eeuw* 17, 3 (Hilversum: 2001) 199–224.
 - 24 Blankert A. – Montias J.M. – Aillaud G. – Ruurs R. – Watering W. van de – Resche-Rignon P., *Vermeer* (Amsterdam: 1992) 175.
 - 25 Liedtke, *The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer* 9, fig. 8, cites a painting attributed to Frans Snyders, *A Kitchen Maid Pouring Milk*, ca. 1630, oil on canvas, 126 × 97 cm, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.
 - 26 Compare the maid Jannetje in the anonymous farce, *Klucht van de koeck-vreyer* (Amsterdam, Ter Druckerij van Erasmus: 1659) 10, who exclaims: 'Wat heen, en waer ga ick nu best? In Stadt staen al de Cramen noch toe; en is noch weynigh volcks op straet. Ick magh gaen 't Vryers paetje, om te sien, en gesien te worden [...]'. Cited in abbreviated form in Nevitt, Jr., "Vermeer on the Question of Love" 100.
 - 27 On this painting, see Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting* 118–119, and on cocks and hares, Jongh E. de, "Erotica in vogelperspectief: De dubbelzinnigheid van een reeks 17de eeuwse genrevoorstellingen", *Simiolus* 3, 1 (1968–1969) 22–74.
 - 28 Nicolaes Maes, *The Eavesdropper*, 1657, oil on canvas, 92 × 121 cm, Dordrechts Museum, Dordrecht.



FIGURE 10.11 *Gerard Dou, Kitchen Maid at the Window, 1652. Oil on panel, 33 × 23.8 cm. Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe.*

IMAGE © BPK, BERLIN / ART RESOURCE, NY.

with the poultry).²⁹ Similarly characterized milkmaids and maidservants may have reflected a longstanding perception that domestic servants hailed mainly from the peasant class.³⁰ Maidservants were not always objects of satire, to be sure, and Wayne Franits has reminded us of the many dutiful servants in the paintings of Pieter de Hooch.³¹

Vermeer's *Milkmaid* stands apart from them all, however. She differs from the lascivious girls, for she is modestly dressed. She differs from the idle ones, for she is absorbed in her work. She differs even from De Hooch's dutiful servants, who inhabit a clearly defined domestic environment in which they display their worthiness in their interactions with the mistress and children of the house. Vermeer's milkmaid, rather, is visually isolated, with only the Cupid tile and the foot warmer as subtle iconographic cues.

How should we relate those cues to the milkmaid herself? Arthur Wheelock has characterized Vermeer's figure as a type of domestic virtue but has also squared this moral cast with the Cupid and the foot warmer—the latter for him, based on his reading of the emblem in *Sinnepoppen*, signifying a love more nurturing than erotic: 'As she carefully steadies the flow of milk from her pitcher to the earthenware bowl, the milkmaid embodies the ideals of constant attention and caring associated in emblematic literature with the foot-warmer.'³² Wheelock finds visual analogies for *The Milkmaid* mainly in the iconographies of virtue: for example, he suggests a source for the pouring of milk in an earlier Italian painting of the pious widow Queen Artemisia pouring liquid (presumably not milk?) to mix with her husband's ashes and imbibe so that she might become his living tomb.³³ Walter Liedtke's bawdier readings of *The Milkmaid*, on the other hand, characterize the foot warmer as having to do with the heat of passion: he suggests that viewers would have understood it as a titillating motif because it heated not only the lady's feet but up her

29 Nicolaes Maes, *The Idle Servant*, 1655, oil on panel, 70 × 53.3 cm, The National Gallery, London.

30 Bavel B. van, "Cleanliness in the Dutch Golden Age", *Past & Present* 205 (November 2009) 65.

31 Franits may be right that 'well-behaved servants in genre painting far outnumber their mischievous sisters': Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting* 166.

32 Wheelock, Jr. A.K., *Vermeer and the Art of Painting* (New Haven – London: 1995) 71, reiterated in the catalog entry (by Wheelock and Ben Broos) in Wheelock, Jr. A.K. (ed.), *Johannes Vermeer* [exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Mauritshuis, The Hague] (Washington, D.C. – The Hague: 1995) 110.

33 Jørgen Wadum first suggested the comparison with the Italian painting, which is by Domenico Fiasella, dated ca. 1645, private collection: see the discussion (by Wheelock and Broos) in Wheelock, Jr. (ed.), *Johannes Vermeer* 110.

skirt as well.³⁴ Liedtke further relates the milkmaid's pouring action to various genre paintings in which a woman holding an open jug implies her sexual availability, with the vessel as a uterine pun.³⁵ Yet Liedtke also acknowledges that Vermeer's milkmaid, in her dress and demeanour, marks a turn towards a more discreet eroticism, which he locates in the interaction between painting and viewer: 'The (intended) male viewer feels temptation and restraint, desire and reservation.'³⁶ Still other ways of reconciling the same iconographic elements are possible: Marjorie Wieseman, for example, accepts *The Milkmaid* as a type of virtue but retains the Cupid and foot warmer as references to illicit desire; there is a moral message, for her, then, in the milkmaid 'turning her back on the foot-warmer' to focus on her domestic task.³⁷

These various readings of *The Milkmaid* are not, I think, mutually exclusive; they are even sanctioned, perhaps, by Vermeer's allusiveness. On reflection, my own earlier published remarks on *The Milkmaid* seem to share something with all of them.³⁸ In the following, however, I shall place *The Milkmaid* in the context of what I think is a more nuanced discourse of love, in which both domestic virtue and erotic desire might find their legitimate place. Certain other iconographies—at once peripheral and relevant, I think, to Vermeer's painting—suggest an interpretive way forward.

One is the imagery that originated in the sixteenth-century kitchen and market paintings of Pieter Aertsen (1508–1575) and his nephew Joachim Beuckelaer (ca. 1533–ca. 1573/74). A number of scholars have suggested that Vermeer's milkmaid seems more akin to the sturdy, serious-looking women that populate these scenes than to Dou's and Maes's alternately coquettish and idle maids [see Figs. 10.13 & 10.15]. Wheelock, for example, describes one female cook by Aertsen as 'heroic', recalling the language he uses for *The Milkmaid* ('this woman with such uncommon stature').³⁹ Reindert Falkenburg has made the case that Aertsen's and Beuckelaer's kitchen maids and market women may have evoked a higher, classicizing visual mode without necessarily elevating the moral character of the figures themselves, along the lines of the

34 Liedtke, *The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer* 13. I am not aware of any clear reference to such warming properties of foot warmers in texts of the period, though perhaps it goes without saying.

35 Ibid., 17.

36 Ibid., 17–18.

37 Wieseman M.E., *Vermeer's Women: Secrets and Silence* (New Haven – London: 2011) 79.

38 Nevitt, Jr., "Vermeer on the Question of Love" 100–102.

39 Wheelock, Jr., *Vermeer and the Art of Painting* (the first quotation) 65, (the second) 63.

literary trope of the 'paradoxical encomium'.⁴⁰ Whatever the connotations of individual figures, however, I would argue that this pictorial tradition offered Vermeer more than just a figural type.

Aertsen's and Beuckelaer's paintings frequently include biblical narratives in the background that relate to the imagery in the foreground: one of these, Christ in the House of Mary and Martha, offers special insight, I think, into Vermeer's *Milkmaid*. (Vermeer did his own *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, of course, which we shall consider shortly.) The story is from the Gospel of St. Luke, Ch. 10:

And it happened when they left, that he [Jesus] went in a village, and a woman named Martha received him in her house. And she had a sister named Mary who, sitting at the feet of the Lord, listened to his word. And Martha was bothered by many details of serving, and she stood and said, 'Lord, do you not consider that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me'. And the Lord, answering, said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are concerned about many details, and restlessly distracted by many things, but only one thing is necessary: Mary has chosen the best part, which will not be taken away from her'.⁴¹

40 Falkenburg R.L., "Alter Einoutus": Over de aard en herkomst van Pieter Aertsens stilvenconceptie', in Lemmens G.T.M. – Kloek W.T. (eds.), *Pieter Aertsen. Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 40 (1989) 40–66, and Falkenburg R.L., "Pieter Aertsen, Rhyparographer", in Koopmans J. – Meadow M. – Meerhoff K. – Spies M. (eds.), *Rhetoric-Rhétoriqueurs-Rederijkers*, Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen. Verhandelingen, Afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks 162 (Amsterdam – New York – Tokyo: 1995) 197–217. Honig E.A., *Painting and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp* (New Haven – London: 1998) articulates a different approach to such paintings, though one that is not, as she notes (idem, 241 n. 23) necessarily inconsistent with Falkenburg's. See also Kwak Z., "'Taste the fare and chew it with your eyes': A Painting by Pieter Pietersz and the Amusing Deceit in 16th- and 17th-century Dutch and Flemish Kitchen Scenes", in Houdt T. van – Jong J.L. de – Kwak Z. – Spies M. – Vaeck M. van (eds.), *On the Edge of Truth and Honesty: Principles and Strategies of Fraud and Deceit in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: 2002) 223–251 (esp., with regard to Falkenburg's thesis, 228–229 n. 17).

41 I translate here from the Catholic vernacular Bible, *Den gheheelen Bybel, / Inhoudende het oude ende nieuwe Testament [...]*, trans. Nicolaas van Winghe (Leuven, Bartholomeus van Grave: 1548), Gospel of St. Luke, Ch. 10, vss. 38–42: 'Ende tis ghebuert doen sij ghinghen dat hi is ghegaen in een casteelken, ende een vrouwe Martha ghenamt heeft hem ontfanghen in haer huys, ende dese hadde een suster ghenamt Maria, die welcke oock sittende neffens die voeten des Heeren hoorde sijn woort, Maer Martha was sorchuuldichlic becommert met veel dienens, die welcke heeft ghestaen ende gheseydt. Heere en achte ghi dat niet, dat mijn suster my heeft alleen laten dienen? daerom segt haer dat sij my helpe, Ende die Heere antwoordende heeft tot haer geseyt. Martha, Martha ghi sijt

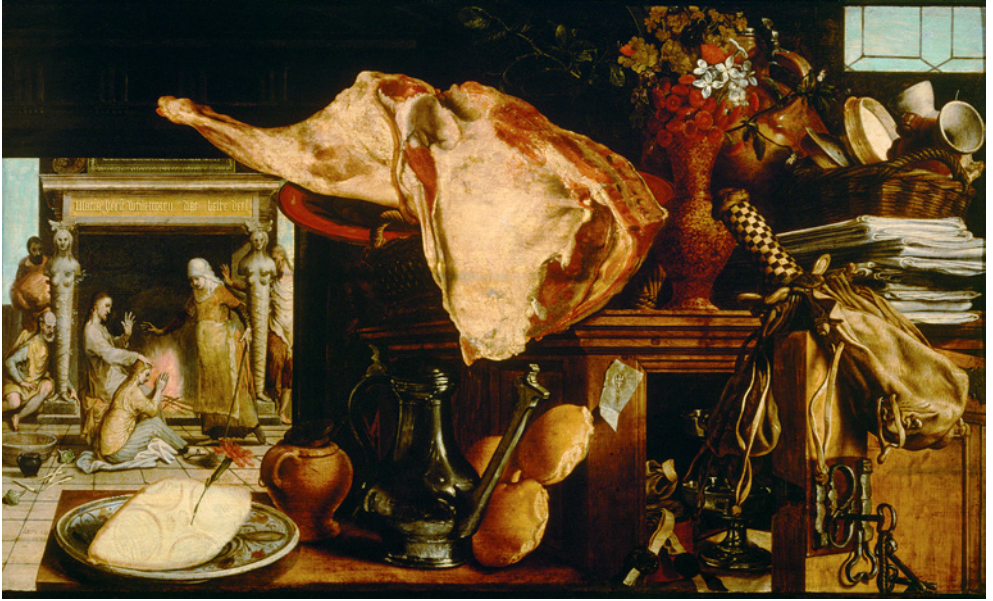


FIGURE 10.12 Pieter Aertsen, *Still Life with Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, 1552. Oil on panel, 60 × 101.5 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.
IMAGE © KHM-MUSEUMSVERBAND.

In the earliest known painting of the subject by Aertsen, dated 1552, a still life consisting mainly of food but including references to other worldly concerns (keys, a money purse, and legal documents) dominates the foreground; in the background, Mary sits at Christ's feet and Martha stands before them [Fig. 10.12]. A painting by Beuckelaer of 1565 also places Christ and the two sisters in the background, and a bustle of activity in the foreground kitchen [Fig. 10.13]. Jan Emmens related such paintings to the exegetical tradition in which the two sisters represented themes like the active life (*vita activa*) of Martha—embodied mainly in the kitchen in the foreground—versus the contemplative life (*vita contemplativa*) of Mary in the background, or alternately, the contrast of *amor sui* (love of self) and *amor dei* (love of God), again as a dialectic of foreground and background.⁴² As Emmens noted, the visual structure of the paintings

sorcuuldich, ende wort ongherustelijck becommert met veel dinghen, Maer voorwaer een isser van noode, Maria heuet beste deel vercoren, dwelck haer niet en sal afghenomen worden'.

42 Emmens J.A., "Eins aber ist nötig": zu Inhalt und Bedeutung von Markt- und Küchenstücken des 16. Jahrhunderts", in Bruyn J. (ed.), *Album Amicorum J.G. van Gelder* (The Hague: 1973) 94–95 (on the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*), 99 (on *amor dei* and *amor sui*). On



FIGURE 10.13 *Joachim Beuckelaer, Christ in the House of Mary and Martha, 1565. Oil on panel, 113 × 163 cm. Royal Museums of Fine Arts, Brussels.*

IMAGE © ROYAL MUSEUMS OF FINE ARTS OF BELGIUM, BRUSSELS /
PHOTO: J. GELEYS – RO SCAN.

serves the didactic purpose, encouraging the viewer to find the ‘one thing [that] is necessary’, as Christ said.⁴³ Most commentators affirmed that Martha was not sinful herself but inferior to Mary in that the present world—with which Martha is concerned—will pass away, while the world to come—Mary’s part—‘will not be taken away from her’.⁴⁴ Martha’s kitchen is not mentioned in Luke’s text, though later commentaries describe it. The emphasis on food in the paintings, Kenneth Craig has argued, recalls St. Augustine’s moral critique of Martha’s meal preparations: ‘It was an important but transitory work [...] Here you seek for food as for something important; there [in Heaven] God will

Mary and Martha and the two lives, see also Constable G., “The Interpretation of Mary and Martha” (Ch. 1), *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge: 1995) 15–19, and on the broader tradition, Mason M.E., *Active Life and Contemplative Life: A Study of the Concepts from Plato to the Present* (Milwaukee: 1961).

43 Emmens, “Eins aber ist nötig” 94–95.

44 Constable, “The Interpretation of Mary and Martha” 18.

be your food'.⁴⁵ As both Emmens and Craig note, the conspicuous display of meat in the paintings suggests the carnal aspect of Martha's world (literally and figuratively).⁴⁶ Moralizing connotations have been found in the types of food on display, most having to do with gluttony or the lust for delicacies and excessive variety in diet.⁴⁷

One recurring gustatory motif in these paintings that seems highly significant is the pairing of bread and wine. In Aertsen's painting, in the center foreground, we find rolls of bread next to a wine pitcher [Fig. 10.12]. In Beuckelaer's painting, similarly, in the left foreground are rolls of bread, a wine pitcher and glasses [Fig. 10.13]. Another painting by Aertsen, dated 1553, contains what seems to be a kind of internal interpretive frame for these motifs; on the table in the foreground are the rolls of bread, two small carafes and wine glasses, while in the background scene of Christ and the two sisters (directly behind the bread and wine) we find, over the figure of Mary, a relief of Moses with the tablets of the law (the Word of God to which—or to whom—Mary listens), and over Martha, a relief of Aaron collecting the heavenly manna to preserve in a jar (Exodus 16:33): an antetype of the Eucharist [Fig. 10.14].⁴⁸ When Emmens argued that in such paintings we are challenged to find the 'one thing [that is] necessary', he had in mind Mary's act of listening to Christ, yet it seems to me that the elements of the bread and wine are also implicated: as Eucharistic references lost in the culinary profusion precisely so that we may have the experience, as viewers, of finding them.⁴⁹ Aertsen's painting of 1552 [Fig. 10.12]

45 Craig K.M., "Pars Ergo Marthae Transit: Pieter Aertsen's 'Inverted' Paintings of 'Christ in the House of Mary and Martha'", *Oud Holland* 97. 1 (1983) 28 and n. 15. The quotation cited by Craig is from St. Augustine's sermon against the Pelagians (418): St. Augustine, *Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons*, trans. M.S. Muldowney (New York: 1959) 349–350, 357.

46 Emmens, "Eins aber ist nötig" 95–96; and Craig, "Pars Ergo Marthae Transit" 30.

47 On the food as a reference to *leccacitas* or *delicacitas* (lust for, respectively, excessively varied and exotic foods), see Buijs H., "Voorstellingen van Christus in het huis van Martha en Maria in het zestiende-eeuwse keukenstuk", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 40 (1989) 99. On ancient Roman satire as a source for Aertsen's food imagery, see Sullivan M.A., "Aertsen's Kitchen and Market Scenes: Audience and Innovation in Northern Art", *The Art Bulletin* 81. 2 (June 1999) 236–266. Sullivan also notes (*idem*, 254) that such satirical texts influenced later Christian commentaries on the story of Christ in the House of Mary and Martha.

48 Aaron's gathering and preservation of manna is noted by Craig, who finds in it, however, only reference to 'the temporal food that is of such great concern to Martha [...]', Craig, "Pars Ergo Marthae Transit" 34.

49 Emmens, "Eins aber ist nötig" 94–95. For a reading of Aertsen's *Meat Stall* (1551) in Uppsala similar to what I am proposing with regard to the Mary and Martha paintings, see Craig K.M., "Pieter Aertsen and 'The Meat Stall'", *Oud Holland* 96. 1 (1982) 1–15. Craig finds Eucharistic references in the background, where the Virgin offers bread to beggars



FIGURE 10.14 *Pieter Aertsen, Christ in the House of Mary and Martha, 1553. Oil on panel, 126 × 200 cm. Boijmans van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam. Detail.*

IMAGE © MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN, ROTTERDAM / PHOTO: STUDIO TROMP, ROTTERDAM.

includes the verse from St. Luke inscribed on the mantel in the background, 'Maria heeft wtvercoren dat beste deel.' ('Mary has chosen/picked out that best part.'). The verb 'wtvercoren' emphasizing the notion of 'choosing/picking out (of many)'. But the Eucharistic references of bread and wine in all the paintings raise a nice interpretive question. Is Martha's bread the bread of this world in contrast to Mary's bread of heaven? Or is it rather, by analogy to the bread of heaven, a validation of Martha's *vita activa*? I would argue that the question remains open precisely because Martha's position is so fraught with ambiguity: not sinful herself, she is yet surrounded by temptations to sin.

(idem, 4–6), and in the bread (pretzels) hanging next to a wine can (idem, 9) in the upper-left foreground.

Most of the paintings also include figures that appear to be Martha clones—her own kitchen maids (one of whom, Marcella or Martilla, is named in medieval accounts). In some paintings, the disciples drink and consort with the kitchen maids, apparently a comic-moralizing embellishment on the worldly temptations of Martha's sphere: St. Peter is identifiable on the right in Aertsen's painting [Fig. 10.14].⁵⁰ (I would further note that St. Peter with the seated and the standing woman, whom he suggestively touches, may be mimicking *in malo* the trio of Christ with Mary and Martha directly behind). Emmens argued that in these paintings there were not two but three spiritual ways: the *vita contemplativa* of Mary, the *vita activa* of Martha, and the *voluptas carnis* (lust of the flesh) of Martha's kitchen maids.⁵¹ But Mary too was a morally complex figure. In yet another painting by Aertsen of 1559, both sisters take over the foreground: Martha stands on the right to confront Mary, who appears seated on the left as an elegantly-dressed lady with a lap dog [Fig. 10.15]. This characterization probably reflects medieval retellings that portray the two sisters as being from a family of great wealth: Martha is the responsible older sister who oversees the household, while Mary is conflated with Mary Magdalen, the courtesan who converted from a life of sin to follow Christ.⁵² Some writers theorized that the episode in St. Luke's Gospel was the moment of the Magdalen's conversion.⁵³ In one account, Martha, already a believer, persuades her frivolous sister Mary to come listen to Jesus by telling her how handsome he is.⁵⁴ So Mary had her own worldly nature, which, however, would come to an end at the moment of her encounter with Christ.

50 Craig, "Pars Ego Marthae Transit" 30–31. On Erasmus's complaint (in his *Christiani Matrimonii Institutio* of 1526) about paintings of Christ in the House of Mary and Martha that poke fun at the worldly behaviour of Martha and the disciples, see Moxey P.K.F., "Erasmus and the Iconography of Pieter Aertsen's Christ in the House of Martha and Mary in the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 34 (1971) 335–336.

51 Emmens, "Eins aber ist nötig" 95–96; and see idem, 100, n. 15, on the Aristotelian roots of the idea of the three lives.

52 The Mary and Martha in Luke Ch. 10 were usually assumed to be the same sisters Mary and Martha that are described in the Gospel of St. John (11:1) as living in the village of Bethany with their brother Lazarus. (Neither Lazarus nor Bethany is mentioned by Luke). On the conflation of that Mary ('Mary of Bethany') with Mary Magdalen, see Constable, "The Interpretation of Mary and Martha" 6–7. The notion that Mary and Martha were rich landowners is found in Jacobus de Voragine's thirteenth-century *Golden Legend*, cited in Craig, "Pars Ergo Marthae Transit ..." 30, n. 19, among other medieval texts.

53 Constable, "The Interpretation of Mary and Martha" 7.

54 Ibid., 128–130.



FIGURE 10.15 *Pieter Aertsen, Christ in the House of Mary and Martha, 1559. Oil on panel, 140 × 196.5 cm. Royal Museums of Fine Arts, Brussels.*

IMAGE © ROYAL MUSEUMS OF FINE ARTS OF BELGIUM, BRUSSELS /

PHOTO: J. GELEYS – RO SCAN.

Aertsen's and Beuckelaer's paintings of the subject had a certain legacy in the northern Netherlands, as exemplified in a painting by Joachim Wtewael of Utrecht of ca. 1620–1625 featuring a kitchen maid in the foreground and, in the right background, Christ with Mary and Martha [Fig. 10.16].⁵⁵ Wtewael doubles the Eucharistic reference: on the table in the left foreground, a glass filled with wine (rather than the empty glasses in Aertsen's and Beuckelaer's scenes) and a roll of bread stand out in sharp focus, and in the background detail, a similar glass and roll of bread appear on the table before Jesus [Fig. 10.17].⁵⁶

55 On Delft painters who produced such kitchen and market paintings into the seventeenth century, as well as paintings by Aertsen and Beuckelaer in Delft collections, see Liedtke W., *Vermeer: The Complete Paintings* (New York: 2008) 78.

56 Mentioned by A.W. Lowenthal in her discussion of this painting (cat. 30) in Spicer J.A. – Orr L.F. (eds.), *Masters of Light: Dutch Painters in Utrecht during the Golden Age* [exh. cat., The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco] (New Haven – London: 1997) 224. See also Lowenthal A.W., *Joachim Wtewael and Dutch Mannerism* (Doornspijk: 1986) 148–149, A-84.



FIGURE 10.16 *Joachim Wtewael. A Kitchen Maid with Christ in the House of Mary and Martha, ca. 1620–1625. Oil on canvas, 103.2 × 72.3 cm. Centraal Museum, Utrecht.*
IMAGE © COLLECTION CENTRAAL MUSEUM, UTRECHT.



FIGURE 10.17 *Joachim Wtewael. A Kitchen Maid with Christ in the House of Mary and Martha, ca. 1620–1625. Centraal Museum, Utrecht. Detail.*

IMAGE © COLLECTION CENTRAAL MUSEUM, UTRECHT.

Martha here again stands by the fireplace with a cooking pot, while Mary, on the right, sits listening to Christ. Wtewael's elegant-looking Mary, interestingly, uses a foot warmer, hinting perhaps that her contemplations formerly had been of the worldly kind.

In his own *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha* of ca. 1654–1655, Vermeer probably drew on a range of pictorial sources—and not only from the Aertsen-



FIGURE 10.18 *Johannes Vermeer, Christ in the House of Mary and Martha, ca. 1654–1655. Oil on canvas, 160 × 142 cm. National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh; Presented by the sons of W.A. Coats in memory of their father, 1927.*

IMAGE © NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND.

Beuckelaer (and Wtewael) tradition, for the theme had continued in the work of a number of painters with quite different styles [Fig. 10.18].⁵⁷ Like Aertsen's and Beuckelaer's, however, almost all the paintings associate Martha with a

⁵⁷ In the Antwerp painter Erasmus Quellinus II's *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, ca. 1645, oil on canvas, Musée des Beaux Art, Valenciennes, Christ and the listening Mary have similar poses as the figures in Vermeer's painting; whether Vermeer knew Quellinus's picture is unclear. For numerous examples, including northern Netherlandish paintings

superabundance of food: Wheelock has noted how different Vermeer's version of the theme is in the reduction of the meal to bread only, in which Wheelock finds a Eucharistic reference—which is plausible, surely, considering the iconography of bread and wine in the paintings we have just examined.⁵⁸ For Wheelock, this innovation is bound up in a more even-handed appreciation, on Vermeer's part, of the two sisters.⁵⁹ Vermeer, in eliminating the piles of meat and buxom maids in Martha's kitchen, dispenses with any clear admonishments about the carnal dangers of the active life. Now Martha merely presents the bread, with considerable reverence, it seems, to Jesus. The appreciation for Martha was not unprecedented in the Middle Ages, but seems to have gained currency in the early modern period. In her *Interior Castle*, written in 1577, St. Teresa of Avila averred that 'Martha and Mary must join together to show hospitality to the Lord [...]. How would Mary, always seated at his feet, provide him with food if her sister did not help her?'⁶⁰ She elsewhere enjoined her Carmelite sisters not to shrink from kitchen work: 'Know that if it is in the kitchen, the Lord walks among the pots and pans [...].'⁶¹ The Protestant reformers, for their part, were divided on the subject of Mary and Martha. Luther came down on the side of Mary, who for him embodied his beloved principle of *sola fides*, while Martha suggested the futility of good works.⁶² Calvin found that Mary's and Martha's actions—listening to Christ and serving him—were both licit in themselves, but resisted interpreting the sisters as more broadly allegorical.⁶³ We should probably not correlate the theme too rigidly with any confessional identity; nevertheless, Vermeer's singular focus on the bread with its Eucharistic connotations might well have suggested for contemporary viewers, as it did for Wheelock, something on the order of a Catholic sensibility.⁶⁴

in the seventeenth century, see Pigler A., *Barockthemen: Eine Auswahl von Verzeichnissen zur Ikonographie des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, 3 vols. (Budapest: 1974) I 324–327.

58 Wheelock, Jr. (ed.), *Johannes Vermeer* 94.

59 Wheelock, Jr. A.K. and Broos B. in Wheelock, Jr. (ed.), *Johannes Vermeer* 94. Something like this in Vermeer's treatment of Mary and Martha is also recognized by Hedquist V., "Religion in the Art and Life of Vermeer", in Franits W. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Vermeer* (Cambridge: 2001) 120–121, which Hedquist relates to Vermeer's multi-confessional family history and presumed interest in bridging sectarian differences (idem, 121).

60 St. Teresa of Avila, *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans. K. Kavanaugh – O. Rodriguez, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C.: 1980) II *The Interior Castle* (VII, 4, 12) 448. The text was written in 1577.

61 Ibid., III, *The Book of Her Foundations* (5, 8) 119–120. The text was written 1573–1582.

62 Spencer F.S., *Salty Wives, Spirited Mothers, and Savvy Widows: Capable Women of Purpose and Persistence in Luke's Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge, MA: 2012) 121.

63 Ibid., 121–122.

64 Wheelock, Jr. A.K. and Broos B. in Wheelock, Jr. (ed.), *Johannes Vermeer* 94.

In *The Milkmaid* then—early in his evolution from the ‘Antiek’ to the ‘Modern’—Vermeer seems to have created a genre painting that was inflected by his engagement with the pictorial tradition of Christ in the House of Mary and Martha.⁶⁵ One aspect is the bread, another his characterization of the milkmaid herself: strong-armed, with sleeves rolled up, and a serious demeanor.⁶⁶ There are differences, certainly: the small scale, different from the mostly largish paintings of the biblical theme. What *The Milkmaid* takes from the earlier pictorial tradition of Christ in the House of Mary and Martha is translated into the more intimate mode of northern Netherlandish domestic genre painting.⁶⁷ Vermeer's *Milkmaid* seems large nonetheless.

The stark simplicity of the milkmaid's environment—which is partly what confers such a monumental presence on such a small figure—also departs radically from the paintings of Aertsen, Beuckelaer, and Wtewael, as well as those of Dou and Maes, all of which present culinary or domestic clutter as the sign of the world and its distractions. Vermeer's *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha* had already prepared the way in this emptying out of the kitchen. Now, in *The Milkmaid*, the daylight shines brightly through the window, and makes the blankness of the interior itself a carrier of meaning. The milkmaid's simple kitchen with its whitewashed walls is a bit pockmarked, and of course bereft of the elegant furnishings found in the spaces inhabited by his *Juffrouwen* [Fig. 10.4]. But it is orderly and clean. As I have suggested elsewhere, Vermeer's aesthetic of interior space compares interestingly to a passage in Johan van Heemskerck's *Batavische Arcadia* of 1637, a pastoral romance about a group of courting youth from The Hague in which one man tells of his travels in the Pyrenees, where he ran across a country inn run by a fellow expatriate Dutchman:

I was amazed to find there a neatness (*nettigheydt*), in whitewashed walls and in other signs of Dutch cleanliness (*Hollantsche puntigheydt*) to which my eyes had almost grown unaccustomed, for I had been a long time abroad.⁶⁸

65 Blankert, “Vermeer's Modern Themes and their Tradition” 31–45, as well as Vergara L., “Perspectives on Women in the Art of Vermeer”, in Franits W. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Vermeer* (Cambridge: 2001) 56–63.

66 On the costume of Vermeer's milkmaid, including her rolled-up over-sleeves or *morsmouwen*, see Winkel M. de, “The Interpretation of Dress in Vermeer's Paintings”, in Gaskell I. – Jonker M. (eds.), *Vermeer Studies*, Studies in the History of Art 55, xxxiii (New Haven – London: 1998) 328.

67 The connection with Leiden painting is made in Liedtke, *Vermeer: The Complete Paintings* 78.

68 Heemskerck Johan van, *Inleydinghe tot het ontwerp van een Batavische Arcadia* [original edition, Amsterdam: 1637], (ed.) P.E.L. Verkuyl (Deventer: 1982) 86: ‘[...] was ick

Perhaps, then, there is a native Dutch (or specifically Hollandish) identity in this kitchen. The sparse interior also gives the effect that Vermeer's milkmaid, far from being overwhelmed by the world, is very much in control of it. It is usually assumed that she is a servant in a larger household, but might she be, just as easily, mistress of her own kitchen? The biblical Martha was also, notably, both mistress of the house and responsible for serving. Perhaps Vermeer derives the ambiguity of the milkmaid's status in this sense from the biblical theme, but expresses it in the figure's visual isolation from any mistress or household. In so doing he allows the painting to be about, not so much a servant, as service—as a virtue. Mary and Martha (as well as their Old Testament antetypes, Rachel and Leah) had long been bywords for, respectively, the contemplative and active lives. Religious men taking on administrative duties might remark that they had 'left Mary for Martha' or employ similar expressions.⁶⁹ Thus it is plausible to imagine a painting like *The Milkmaid* in which the figure is not literally Martha, but on some level, a Martha type.

We have been concerned with Martha's bread and wine: let us now consider how, in *The Milkmaid*, bread and milk are brought together. There are a few clues about what the milkmaid is doing. The basket contains whole loaves, while the bread closer to the milkmaid, next to the pot, is broken into smaller pieces, suggesting that she is mixing the bread with the milk. The pot is probably for cooking: in Vermeer's day, milk was almost always cooked (if not made into butter or cheese) because it spoiled so quickly.⁷⁰ The milkmaid is likely preparing heated porridge—'pap' in Dutch—which might be eaten by anyone, though it is frequently associated with the feeding of young children.⁷¹

verwondert van daer te sien een nettigheydt (soo in ghewitte muren, als andere Hollantsche puntigheydt) daer myne ooghen door een langhe uytlandigheydt nu bynaest van af-ghewendt waren.' Cited in Nevitt, Jr., "Vermeer on the Question of Love" 97.

69 Constable, "The Interpretation of Mary and Martha" 35.

70 On the uses of milk, see Peter G. Rose in Barnes D.R. – Rose P.G. (eds.), *Matters of Taste: Food and Drink in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art and Life* [exh. cat., Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, NY] (Syracuse, NY: 2002) 17–18.

71 Rand H., "Wat maakte de 'Keukenmeid' van Vermeer?", *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 46 (1998) 275–278, 349–351 (English version), and 5, and Dibbitts T., "The Milkmaid", in *The Milkmaid by Vermeer and Dutch Genre Painting: Masterworks from the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam* [exh. cat., Tokyo Shinbun] (Tokyo: 2007) 4–13, both believe the milkmaid is making a (risen) 'bread pudding', though this would require some ingredients (eggs, sugar, perhaps beer) not in evidence. Liedtke, *The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer* 9–11, doubts that the painting is susceptible to precise culinary analysis but seems to think it more likely that she is making a heated porridge of milk and bread—more soup than

I would further compare the bread and milk in Vermeer's painting to a couple of pictorial traditions: first, that of the *Virgo Lactans*—the Virgin nursing the Christ child—which emerged as a common devotional theme in the late Middle Ages.⁷² This sacred iconography might seem far removed from the genre imagery of *The Milkmaid*, but it is worth noting that certain early Netherlandish paintings switch the lactic source from breast milk to porridge. In Jan Mostaert's *Holy Family at Table* of ca. 1495–1500, the Virgin gives porridge to the child in a little bowl, as she does in Gerard David's so-called *Madonna of the Milk Soup*, of ca. 1515, which seems to have been a popular image, judging from its many early copies [Fig. 10.19].⁷³ (Note also the bread in both scenes.) There is a connection here with Luke, Ch. 10: the Virgin appears in some later accounts of the story, and in some paintings, with Jesus and his disciples at Mary's and Martha's. She is present, for example, in Figs. 10.13, 10.14 & 10.15, seated between Mary and Martha. Some commentaries present the Virgin as the ideal synthesis of the active and the contemplative paths: the Virgin, as mother, provided Jesus with sustenance, but also, as his follower, listened attentively to him.⁷⁴ *The Milkmaid*, though I have aligned her mainly with the *vita activa* of Martha, also suggests the reconciliation of the two sisters: she prepares a meal, but with a contemplative air, an air, perhaps, of maternal devotion.⁷⁵

pastry—'pap', that is, on which see also Valenze D., *Milk: A Local and Global History* (New Haven – London: 2011) 153–156.

- 72 Warner M., *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: 1976) 192–194.
- 73 Jan Mostaert, *Holy Family at Table*, ca. 1495–1500, panel, 37.3 × 23.8 cm, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne.
- 74 Constable, "The Interpretation of Mary and Martha" 8–9, 50, 130. See also Craig, "Pars Ego Marthae Transit", 32–34, who notes (idem, 33) that St. Luke Ch. 10 was used as a reading for the Feast of the Assumption: Martha's reception of Jesus and Mary was analogous to the Virgin's reception of Christ into her womb, and in turn, Christ's reception of the Virgin in heaven.
- 75 Valerie Hedquist, "Religion in the Art and Life of Vermeer" 121–124, has perceived a Marian aspect (the Virgin Mary, that is) in Vermeer's paintings such as the *Woman Holding a Balance*, ca. 1662–1664, in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., finding a precedent for such intersections of genre imagery and religious iconography in early Netherlandish paintings that imagined the Holy Family in contemporary domestic settings. See also Vergara L., "Perspectives on Women in the Art of Vermeer", who notes (idem, 56) the argument made previously by Eric Jan Sluijter that the imagery of Vermeer's *Art of Painting* derives, in part, from paintings of St. Luke painting the Virgin: Sluijter E.J., "Vermeer, Fame, and Female Beauty: *The Art of Painting*", in Gaskell I. – Jonker M. (eds.), *Vermeer Studies*, Studies in the History of Art 55, XXXIII (New Haven – London: 1998)



FIGURE 10.19 Gerard David, *Madonna of the Milk Soup*, ca. 1515. Oil on panel, 33 × 28 cm. Aurora Art Fund, Inc., New York.

IMAGE © AURORA ART FUND, INC., NEW YORK.

Her manner is in her gaze—downward, inwardly directed—not the outward, erotically motivated female gazes in the other works by De Gheyn, Dou, and Vermeer himself [Figs. 10.9, 10.11 & 10.4]. In most of the paintings of *Christ in*

272. I would also like to thank Maryam Athari for her comments on the milkmaid's devotional air, made in response to an earlier version of my paper delivered at the University of Houston. A number of my colleagues at the Lovis Corinth Colloquium noted that the ultramarine of the milkmaid's apron enhances the preciousness of the painting, with, perhaps, Marian-devotional overtones. I would only add that the milkmaid's clothing – blue apron, red skirt and yellow jacket – seems to combine the dress of Mary and Martha from Vermeer's earlier painting. And *that*, finally, may be too much colour analysis.

the *House of Mary and Martha*, the kitchen maids skewer birds and look at us, smirking, as if to ask us what we think that means: industrious women, on some level, but surrounded by an array of gustatory temptations and sexual innuendos, and keen, it seems, to implicate us in their moral dilemmas [Figs. 10.13, 10.14 & 10.16].⁷⁶ Van Hoogstraten's two paintings narrate a shifting female gaze: in her lovesick state, the woman looks out at us in seeming desperation [Fig. 10.7]. As a mother, she looks down, lovingly, at her child [Fig. 10.8]. The milkmaid's downcast eyes also testify to her virtue and dutifulness—perhaps even to her love, in a sense.⁷⁷

There is another iconography that combines love, milk, and children that seems relevant to *The Milkmaid*: that of *caritas* (charity). St. Paul wrote: 'And now abide faith, hope, and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love'.⁷⁸ *Caritas*—St. Jerome's Latin for the Greek *agape* ('liefde' in Dutch)—was often pictured as a mother nursing her children.⁷⁹

In the pictorial tradition of *Caritas*, moreover, we note a similar development in the dispensation of milk as in the *Virgo Lactans*. Wtewael produced several paintings in which *Caritas* breastfeeds her youngest child but dispenses porridge in little bowls to the others, for example, in a painting dated 1627 [Fig. 10.20]. In this scene, meanwhile, a minor drama unfolds: *Caritas*'s children nurse or eat their porridge contentedly except for the one on the right, with its foot propped on a foot warmer, who grimaces in pain from the clawing cat out to steal his porridge. This side narrative—the crying child with the foot warmer and the scratching cat—recurs in Wtewael's *Caritas* paintings.⁸⁰ Cats

76 Wheelock, Jr., *Vermeer and the Art of Painting* 65.

77 On the lowered female gaze as a sign of virtue, albeit in a different context, see Nevitt, Jr. H.R., "Bridal Decorum and Dangerous Looks: Rembrandt's *Wedding Feast of Samson* (1638)", in Chong A. – Zell M. (eds.), *Rethinking Rembrandt* (Zwolle: 2002) 49–71, (notes) 217–222.

78 *Den gheheelen Bybel/Inhoudende het oude ende nieuwe Testament ...*, trans. Nicolaas van Winghe, 1 *Corinthians* 13:13: 'Ende nu blijven gheloove, hope, ende liefde, dese drie, maer die meeste van desen is die liefde'.

79 See Freyhan R., "The Evolution of the Caritas Figure in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11 (1948) 68–86; and Tapié A. et al. (eds.), *L'Allégorie dans la peinture: la représentation de la charité au XVIIe siècle* [exh. cat., Musée des beaux arts de Caen] (Caen: 1986).

80 E.g. his *Caritas*, 1623, Johnny Van Haften Ltd., London, in Clifton J. – Helmus L.M. – Wheelock, Jr. A.K. (eds.), *Pleasure and Piety: The Art of Joachim Wtewael* [exh. cat., Centraal Museum, Utrecht; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston] (Princeton – Oxford: 2015) 164–166, no. 38. See also Wtewael's *Caritas*, 1623, oil on panel, Private Collection, in idem, fig. 1, 166, and a *Caritas* by Joachim's son Peter Wtewael, dated 1628, in Lowenthal, *Joachim Wtewael and Dutch Mannerism* D-21, 181, pl. 183.



FIGURE 10.20 *Joachim Wtewael, Caritas, 1627. Oil on panel, 83.6 × 73.2 cm. Sotheby's, London, July 7, 2004, Lot 14.*

IMAGE © SOTHEBY'S, LONDON.

lurk about in earlier *Caritas* paintings by other artists, and the motif of the cat scratching one of *Caritas*'s children appears in a painting of ca. 1581 by Cornelis van Haarlem.⁸¹ Recall also the cat and foot warmer in Van Hoogstraten's

81 A cat is found among the figures in Frans Floris's *Caritas with Children*, ca. 1560, St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum, discussed in Weissert C., "Personifications of Caritas as Reflexive Figures", in Melion W.S. – Ramakers B. (eds.), *Personification: Embodying Meaning and Emotion* (Leiden: 2016) 502–503. The painting of *Caritas* with the scratching cat by Cornelis van Haarlem, ca. 1582, is in Valenciennes, Musée des Beaux-Arts,

Doctor's Visit, in which Dixon found a reference to female sexual desire, citing a line from Aristotle on the sexual aggression of female cats [Fig. 10.7].⁸² Wtewael's foot warmer and scratching cat suggest both the passion and pangs of sexual desire, in counterpoint to the nurturing love of *Caritas*.⁸³

In associating *caritas* with *The Milkmaid*, I am perhaps naming something close to what Arthur Wheelock perceived in the painting when he wrote that the milkmaid 'embodies the ideals of constant attention and caring [...]'⁸⁴ The associations of *caritas* might seem distant from the more erotically motivated Cupid and foot warmer, but the Christian discourse of love was replete with subtle distinctions and equivalences. *Agape*, for St. Paul, meant love of neighbour; *eros*, for many Christian writers, signified base carnal desire, though others, following Plato, spoke of a heavenly *eros* directed to God.⁸⁵ St. Augustine usually contrasted *caritas*—love of God or neighbour—with *cupiditas*, defined as love of the world.⁸⁶ The Latin *amor* was quite malleable: for St. Augustine it was generally equivalent to *caritas* but might be qualified as *amor dei* (love of God), *amor proximi* (love of neighbour), or *amor mundi* (love of the world).⁸⁷ From the *Song of Songs* to the intertextualities that linked religious devotion to the courtly love and Petrarchan traditions, the early modern culture of love inherited a range of amatory tropes both sacred and profane.⁸⁸

The two loves, erotic and familial, *eros* and *caritas* (to mix our Greek and Latin), coexisted, and the mutability of their symbols fascinated many. In Dutch love poetry and emblems, Cupid often comes off as the mischievous god of sexual desire, but he could also serve as the symbol of a more mature,

on which see Thiel P.J.J. van, *Cornelis Cornelisz. van Haarlem 1562–1638: A Monograph and Catalogue Raisonné*, trans. D.L. Webb (Doornspijk: 1999) 91–92, no. 111. Cats also seem to play sinister roles with the Virgin and Child, such as in the "*Madonna del Gatto*" paintings of Giulio Romano, ca. 1523, Museo di Capodimonte, Naples, and Federico Barrocci, 1574–1575, National Gallery, London.

82 Dixon, *Perilous Chastity* 70–72.

83 Children playing with cats, and sometimes getting scratched, appear in other Dutch paintings and prints, usually with the implication that the scratching cat is just recompense for the child's foolish behaviour: Kortenhorst-von Bogendorf Rupprath, in *Judith Leyster: A Dutch Master and Her World* 136–141, 200–203, 266–269.

84 Wheelock, Jr., *Vermeer and the Art of Painting* 71.

85 See, e.g., Nygren A., *Agape and Eros: The Christian Idea of Love*, trans. P.S. Watson (Chicago: 1982) 124–126, 445, 557, 590–591, 652, 667–672.

86 Ibid., 454, 495. See also Arendt H., *Love and St. Augustine*, ed. J. Scott – J.C. Stark (Chicago: 1996) 17ff.

87 Nygren, *Agape and Eros* 495.

88 Ibid., 445, 662.

conjugal love.⁸⁹ Among the many examples of the latter is Otto van Veen's *Amorum emblemata* of 1608, which Vermeer probably knew, since—as has frequently been noted—the painting of Cupid in his *Lady Standing at the Virginal* seems related to Van Veen's emblem of Cupid holding a tablet with the numeral '1', representing the victory of monogamous love; the image is typical of Van Veen's emblematics of virtuous love, with Cupid presiding over it all [Fig. 10.4].⁹⁰ Cupid is also ubiquitous in Dutch *bruilofsdichten* (wedding poems). In such texts and on their illustrated title pages, Cupid shoots his arrows into the hearts of young lovers, but also oversees their journey from youthful passion to marriage, alongside many burning hearts, conjugal hand-clasps—and frequently, the figure of *Caritas*.⁹¹ Vermeer himself brings *caritas* and erotic desire together in the so-called *Music Lesson* of ca. 1662–1665, in which a man—probably a suitor—observes a young lady playing a virginal (inscribed with the Latin tag, 'Music: companion of joy, medicine of sorrow') while the cropped painting-in-the-painting at right is identifiable as a *Caritas Romana*, the odd variation on the *caritas* theme from the writings of Valerius Maximus in which the virtuous daughter Pero, exemplifying filial piety, breast-feeds her elderly father Cimon in prison.⁹² The iconography of this painting by Vermeer has been parsed in different ways, but clearly, in one way or another, *Eros* is here brought into some sort of relationship with *Caritas*.

Another attribute of *Caritas*, besides milk, was fire. In Dirck Pierterisz. Pers's Dutch edition of Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (1644) the *descriptio* for 'Carita' ('Liefde') includes references to both: 'A woman clothed in red, having on her head a burning flame of fire, holding under her right arm a little child, whom

89 Schenkeveld-van der Bussen M.A., "Cupido in nederlandse letterkunde van de renaissance", *Hermeneus: Tijdschrift voor de antieke cultuur* 47 (Oct.-Dec. 1975) 82–91.

90 Veen Otto van, *Amorum Emblemata* (Antwerp, Hieronymus Verdussen: 1608) 2–3. Van Veen's emblem was first related to Vermeer's painting in Jongh E. de, *Zinne- en minnebeelden in de schilderkunst van de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: 1967) 49–50. (It is worth noting that the card held by Vermeer's Cupid is blank, however.) Van Veen went on to adapt the imagery of secular love to divine love in his *Amoris divini emblemata* (Antwerp, Martini Nutl & Ioannis Meursl: 1615); I thank Walter Melion for this important reference.

91 See Bouman J., *Nederlandse gelegenheidsgedichten voor 1700 in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek te 's-Gravenhage* (The Hague: 1982), for the *Caritas* theme on illustrated title pages, figs. 6, 7, 8, and for Cupid associated with marriage and children, see esp. figs. 15, 21, 22, 59.

92 Johannes Vermeer, *The Music Lesson*, ca. 1662–1665, oil on canvas, 74.6 × 64.1 cm., Royal Collection, London. The Latin is 'Musica Letitiae Co[me]s Medicina Dolor[um]'. The story of Cimon (the imprisoned father) and Pero (his daughter) is found in Valerius Maximus, *Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilium*, Bk 9, Ch. 4. On this painting, see Broos and Wheelock in Wheelock, Jr. (ed.), *Johannes Vermeer* 128–133, no. 8.

she suckles', shown in the accompanying illustration.⁹³ Pers's text then calls attention to the symbolism that *Caritas* somewhat mysteriously, or perhaps significantly, shares with more erotic forms of love:

The heart is said to burn whenever it loves [...] therefore spoke the disciples of Emmaus, 'Did our hearts not burn when He spoke with us'? And this is commonly also said by the Poets of lascivious love [*geyle Liefde*].⁹⁴

In Wtewael's *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, Mary (Magdalen) with her foot warmer points to the fine line between worldly and divine contemplations [Fig. 10.17]. In Vermeer's *Milkmaid*, the foot warmer and Cupid together allude to erotic desire. The milkmaid, however, herself implies the existence of another heat source, though it is not visible in the scene. For her porridge, as noted previously, will likely be cooked: her fire is that of the hearth.

As one enters more into the iconography of the domestic realm, *Caritas* does seem to take over somewhat as presiding deity. In Crispijn de Passe I's engraving after Maarten de Vos, *Concordia*, of 1589, the family gathers for a simple meal, and the maid in the right background scrubs a pot [Fig. 10.21]. (The print is one of a contrasting pair, the other entitled *Discordia*). The inscription in Latin at the bottom, quoting *Proverbs* 15:17, reads: 'Better a small meal of vegetables, with love [*cum charitate*], than a fattened ox, with hatred'.⁹⁵ The theme of the family saying grace was mainly a Protestant one, with some significant

93 Ripa Cesare, *Iconologia, of Uytbeeldinghen des Verstants*, trans. D. Pietersz. (Amsterdam, Dirck Pietersz. Pers: 1644) 292: 'Carita. Liefde. Een Vrouwe in 't rood gekleet, hebbende boven op 't hoofd een brandende vlamme Viers, houdende onder den rechter arm een kindeken, 't welck zy te suygen geeft, [...]'].

94 Ibid., 293: 'Het hert wort geseit te branden wanneer het bemint: Want de Geesten beweeght wordende door eenigh waerdigh onderwerp, doen het bloed te gelijk nae 't hert optreken, 't welck door de hette ontstelt wordende, soo wort het geseit te branden, daerom seyden de discipulen van Emaus oock, branden onse herten niet als hy met ons sprack? En dit wort gemeenlijck van de Poëten mede geseit, van de geyle Liefde'.

95 *Melius est vocari ad olera cum charitate/Quam ad Vitulum saginatum cum odio.*

On further intersections of the 'Family Saying Grace' theme with *Caritas*, see Thiel P.J.J. van, "Poor Parents, Rich Children" (an engraving by Pieter Serwouters), fig. 33, no. 7 in his list of images of the family saying grace, discussed 138–140, as well as Wittewrongel Petrus, *Oeconomia Christiana, ofte, Christelicke huys-houdinge: bestiert naer den reghel van het suyvere woordt Godts* (Amsterdam, Voor de Weduwe van Marten Jansz. Brandt, in compagnie met Abraham van den Burgh: 1655), the title page of which features the family gathered about the table with, at the top, the theological virtues: *Caritas*—Charity—flanked by Hope and Faith.



FIGURE 10.21 *Crispijn de Passe I after Maarten de Vos, Concordia, 1589. Engraving, 22 × 24.3 cm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.*
IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.

exceptions.⁹⁶ De Vos was originally Lutheran, though he seems to have converted to Catholicism after the fall of Antwerp to the Spanish in 1585; his nephew De Passe I, who executed these engravings in Cologne, was Mennonite.⁹⁷

96 The portrait of a family in Cologne, attributed to Gortzius Geldorp, dated 1602, New Orleans, Harry Latter Collection, is cited as a Catholic variant of the theme in Franits W., "The Family Saying Grace: A Theme in Dutch Art of the Seventeenth Century" *Simiolus* 16. 1 (1986) 40; and Thiel P.J.J. van, "'Poor Parents, Rich Children' and 'Family Saying Grace': Two Related Aspects of the Iconography of Late Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Dutch Domestic Morality", *Simiolus* 17. 2/3 (1987) 133–134, no. 4a, fig. 29.

97 Veldman I.M., "Representations of Labor and Diligence in Late-Sixteenth-Century Netherlandish Art: The Secularization of the Work Ethic", in Wheelock, Jr. A.K. – Seef A.F. (eds.), *Public and Private in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age* (Newark, NJ – London: 2000) 137.



FIGURE 10.22 Jan Steen, *Prayer Before the Meal*, ca. 1667–1671. Oil on canvas, 62.9 × 78.1 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art, John G. Johnson Collection, Cat. 514, Philadelphia.
IMAGE © PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART.

The Catholic Jan Steen, in fact, did a number of genre paintings of families saying grace, one of which, dated ca. 1667–1671, shows a family of humble means gathered about a communal bowl of porridge—made from milk and probably bread, with another loaf of bread on the bench [Fig. 10.22].⁹⁸ The mother joins her baby's hands together in prayer. She also bares her breast, which, juxtaposed with the bowl of milky porridge, seems to me to strike an analogy between the mother's milk and the porridge given the entire family, an allusion,

⁹⁸ On Steen's paintings of the theme, see Franits, "The Family Saying Grace" 40, n. 31, and 45–49, including the Philadelphia painting (idem, fig. 13, discussed 47–49). On this painting, see also Barnes D.R. – Rose P.G. (eds.), *Matters of Taste* 132, no. 52.

I would argue, to *Caritas*.⁹⁹ In the foreground, a dog licks an overturned pot, a recurring detail in paintings by Steen that Wayne Franits has compared to a passage from Plutarch (repeated by Jacob Cats) in which the dog licking the pot stands for the ill-trained child—which, in Steen's painting, is contrasted with the praying child.¹⁰⁰ Steen's pot, moreover, resembles the pot into which Vermeer's milkmaid pours her milk. In Steen's scene, the pot licked by the dog is surely the cooking pot with its remnants of porridge, like an epilogue to *The Milkmaid's* culinary narrative.

Another inscription in Latin at the bottom of the *Concordia* engraving, finally, brings us specifically to the theme of the present volume: 'Peace nourishes the faculties of invention and stimulates the glorious arts; / With a bountiful hand peace gives every good thing to man' [Fig. 10.21].¹⁰¹ The lines are taken from a poem, *De bello et pacis*, by the Lyons poet Nicholas Bourbon (1503/5–after 1550), where they refer to the flowering of the arts as the fruit of national peace; in the engraving, the theme of peace is brought home to the microcosm of the family. In the literature on Vermeer, the relationship of love and art has mainly been understood to mean that the artist depicts female beauty as an analogy to pictorial beauty, as a reflexive metaphor, that is, of his own art.¹⁰² Yet conjugal love, with children, is also surely bound up in this theme. When Eddy de Jongh first examined the implications of the motto 'Liefde baart kunst' ('Love gives birth to art'), he took note of portraits of Dutch artists that invoked the family as the nurturing setting in which the artist creates.¹⁰³

99 On contemporary beliefs about breast-feeding, see Franits, *Paragons of Virtue* 113–123, in which several images evoke the analogy with *Caritas* (e.g., the etching by Herman Saftleven, *Woman Nursing a Child*, 1647, entitled "Liefde", fig. 91, discussed 114).

100 Franits, "The Family Saying Grace" 45–46.

101 'Pax alit ingenia et praeclaras excitat artes./ Pax homini larga dat bona cuncta manu.') Pax homini larga dat bona cuncta manu.' I am grateful to David Clemenson for help with the Latin.

102 E.g., Sluijter E.J. "Vermeer, Fame, and Female Beauty: *The Art of Painting*", 265–283; Vergara L., "Perspectives on Women in the Art of Vermeer" 54–72 (notes) 193–198; and Zell M., "Liefde baart kunst': Vermeer's Poetics of Painting", *Simiolus* 35 (2011) 142–164.

103 Jongh E. de, *Portretten van echt en trouw: Huwelijk en gezin in de Nederlandse kunst van de zeventiende eeuw* [exh. cat., Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem] (Zwolle: 1986) 57–59. See also the exploration of this idea in Griffey E., "Pro-Creativity: Art, Love and Conjugal Virtue in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Artists' Self-Portraits," *Dutch Crossing* 28 (2004) 27–66. On how Dutch political discourses may have conditioned amatory genre paintings, including the imagery of marriage and family life, see Woodall J., "Love is in the Air: *Amor* as Motivation and Message in Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Painting", *Art History* 19. 2 (1996) 208–246.

In *The Milkmaid*, we can discern Vermeer's engagement with a discourse of love that comprehends *eros* and *caritas* together. All this is highly allusive, to be sure. *The Milkmaid* evokes the familial love of *caritas*, yet she is isolated from the household. She may be preparing a meal for the family, but they are very much offstage. As Michael Montias once observed, Vermeer's household, with its many children and domestic traumas, must have been quite different from the tranquil scenes he painted.¹⁰⁴ These are domestic spaces whose pictorial order draws on an ideal—not necessarily a reality—of family order, spaces in which imagined Petrarchan dramas might unfold, and equally, moments in the kitchen that involved a different kind of love, that of *Caritas*. The isolation of the milkmaid allows her multiple allusions to love and its associations—to bread, milk, and fire—without locking the figure into any one thematic framework. *The Milkmaid's* place in this discourse of love returns us finally to Vermeer himself, looking perhaps at his own Cupid tile, and aware that love in all its variety, from *eros* to *caritas*, is the space within which the artist gives birth to art.

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104 Montias J.M., *Vermeer and His Milieu: A Web of Social History* (Princeton: 1989). 198–199. Montias's identification (idem, 161) of Vermeer's maidservant Tanneke Everpoel—who had protected Vermeer's wife Catharina Bolnes against the assaults of Catharina's brother Willem—as the model for *The Milkmaid*, is an intriguing though unverifiable possibility.

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The Mirror as Rival: Metsu, Mimesis, and Amor in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Painting

Michael Zell

At first glance Gabriel Metsu's *A Woman Seated at a Table and a Man Tuning a Violin* from about 1658 in the National Gallery, London appears to typify the kind of elegant musical courtship scene that Gerard ter Borch introduced into Dutch genre painting in the 1650s [Figs. 11.1 & 11.2]. Ter Borch was an important model for Metsu's abandonment of his early focus on history paintings and broadly painted genre scenes in favour of delicate genre pictures of stylish modern subjects after his move from Leiden to Amsterdam. The usual cast of characters of a decorously dressed young woman and a dignified male suitor are present, with the man's cape and hat indicating that he has been granted entry into the lady's chamber. The couple seems to prepare for a musical duet: he tunes his violin, she holds a musical score, and a viola da gamba lies on the carpeted table, as do two more music sheets. Music making is a common theme in such works, since it both refers to a ritual of elite courtship and functions as a pictorial metaphor for harmony between the sexes.¹ But the typical circuit of affect and meaning is disrupted, as can be seen by comparing the picture to Metsu's slightly later *A Woman with a Score and a Man Tuning a Lute* (*Le Corset bleu*), datable to 1659–1662 [Fig. 11.3]. In this more accomplished painting a gallant youth sporting a sword is perched on a table, tuning his lute as he prepares to accompany the beautiful woman singing from the musical score in her hands. Here the man focuses intently on the woman, like the suitor in Ter Borch's *A Woman Playing the Therobo-Lute and a Cavalier* from about the same date, which was evidently one of Metsu's inspirations for the composition

1 On music making as a pictorial metaphor for harmony between couples and family members, see Jongh E. de, *Portretten van echt en trouw. Huwelijk en gezin in de Nederlandse kunst van de zeventiende eeuw* [exh. cat., Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem] (Zwolle: 1986) 40–45, 280–290. On music in Dutch art, see Buijsen E. – Grijp L.P. et al., *The Hoogsteder Exhibition of Music & Painting in the Golden Age* [exh. cat., Hoogsteder & Hoogsteder Gallery, The Hague; Hessenhuis Museum, Antwerp] (Zwolle: 1994) and most recently Wieseman M.E., *Vermeer and Music. The Art of Love and Leisure* [exh. cat., The National Gallery, London] (London: 2013).



FIGURE 11.1 *Gabriel Metsu, A Woman Seated at a Table and a Man Tuning a Violin* (ca. 1658). Oil on canvas, 43 × 37.5 cm. London, National Gallery.

PHOTO: NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON / ART RESOURCE, NY.

[Fig. 11.2].² In Metsu's earlier London picture, however, the male companion looks directly at the beholder while the woman's attention is fixed firmly on an

2 Waiboer A., *Gabriel Metsu: Life and Work. A Catalogue Raisonné* (New Haven – London: 2012), 88. As Waiboer observes (*ibid.*, 75–77), Ter Borch's picture also served as a source for Metsu's *A Woman Seated at a Table and a Man Tuning a Violin* in London [Fig. 11.1], as did Ter Borch's *Two Women Making Music, Served by a Page* from ca. 1657 (Musée du Louvre) and *A Wine Drinking Couple Served by a Page* from ca. 1656 (private collection).



FIGURE 11.2 Gerard ter Borch, *A Woman Playing the Therobo-Lute and a Cavalier* (ca. 1658). Oil on panel, 36.8 × 32.4 cm. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

PHOTO: THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART / ART RESOURCE, NY.

object on the window sill—a mirror in a black frame with a blue ribbon, which also appears propped on a table in Metsu's *Woman at her Mirror* from about the same date [Fig. 11.4].

By reworking the conventions for representing musical courtship, and suspending the subject's usual actions and familiar meanings, I argue, Metsu transformed this scene into a pictorial situation. The odd combination of the woman's absorption in the mirror's reflection and the man's direct address to



FIGURE 11.3 *Gabriel Metsu, A Woman with a Score and a Man Tuning a Lute (Le Corset bleu)*(ca. 1659–1662). Oil on panel, 40.6 × 30.4 cm. Banbury, Great Britain, Upton House.

PHOTO: NATIONAL TRUST PHOTO LIBRARY / ART RESOURCE, NY.



FIGURE 11.4 *Gabriel Metsu, A Woman at Her Mirror (ca. 1654–1657). Oil on panel, 19.2 × 16.6 cm. London, Wallace Collection.*

PHOTO: BY KIND PERMISSION OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE WALLACE COLLECTION, LONDON / ART RESOURCE, NY.

the viewer as he tunes his instrument can be understood as a creative adaptation of features of contemporary love poetry in which the mirror operates metaphorically as both the model and rival of the poet's frustrated efforts to capture his beloved's true image. With this inflection, I suggest, Metsu fashioned a poetics of desire in pictorial form that offers insight into the productive interactions between poetry and painting in Dutch pictorial realism and underscores the self-reflexive nature of both the literary and visual arts in seventeenth-century Dutch culture.

Metsu's distinctive formulation is a hybrid image that conflates the otherwise unrelated conventions for depicting *burger* courtship and women with mirrors at their toilettes. In Netherlandish art in particular, portrayals of women gazing at their reflections in mirrors, which were popular since the fifteenth century, were usually freighted with associations of female vanity and transience. So deeply entrenched was this misogynistic convention in the Northern pictorial tradition that, as Eric Jan Sluijter contends, seventeenth-century Dutch depictions of women with mirrors were inextricable from moralizing associations.³ At the same time, though, as Sluijter rightly emphasizes, sophisticated, artful images of women with mirrors also constitute alluring renderings of female beauty, the achievement of which was one of the primary tasks of ambitious artists.⁴ Some depictions of women with mirrors, moreover, are personifications of the sense of sight. But the *vanitas* content, according to Sluijter, persists.

How, though, should we read the woman preoccupied with her reflection in Metsu's musical courtship scene, whose modesty and decorousness seem remote from didactic meanings? It hardly seems justified to classify without qualification similar Dutch representations of women with mirrors simply as images of vanity; yet Adriaan Waiboer, author of the recent and most authoritative catalogue of Metsu's work, does so with Metsu's comparably decorous *Woman at Her Toilet* [Fig. 11.4].⁵ Moreover, Metsu's portrait of Lucia Wijbrants in the Minneapolis Institute of Art, which shows the stately patron standing next to a table with a mirror, could hardly have been intended as an admonishing commentary on her vanity.

An allusion to vanity nonetheless seems implicit, even integral to Metsu's musical courtship scene, for the woman gazes past her male companion ostensibly to admire her reflection in the mirror. She recalls somewhat Metsu's earlier *Woman at Her Toilet* from about 1658, where, as Waiboer rightly observes,

3 Sluijter E.J., *Seductress of Sight. Studies in Dutch Art of the Golden Age*, Studies in Netherlandish Art and Cultural History 2 (Zwolle: 2000) 117.

4 Ibid., 112, 114. On women with mirrors in Italian and French Renaissance painting, see Goodman-Soellner E., "Poetic Interpretations of the 'Lady at Her Toilette' Theme in Sixteenth-Century Painting", *The Sixteenth-Century Journal* 14 (1983) 426–442 and Cranston J., *The Poetics of Portraiture in the Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge – New York: 2000) 156–167.

5 Waiboer, *Gabriel Metsu: Life and Work* 44. The portrait was originally painted in 1667 and probably updated with a more fashionable style of dress and hairdo by another artist on the occasion of Lucia's second marriage in 1672. See Roelofs P., "Early Owners of Paintings by Metsu in Leiden and Amsterdam", in Waiboer A. et al., *Gabriel Metsu* [exh. cat., National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.] (New Haven – London: 2010–2011) 107, and Waiboer, *Gabriel Metsu: Life and Work* 142–143.

the contrast between the woman's youthfulness with the servant's old age, her open *kamdoeck* and other motifs such as the discarded slipper placed conspicuously in the foreground, provoke a stronger association with the misogynistic tradition of linking women and mirrors to transience and female narcissism [Fig. 11.5].⁶ But the London picture's comparatively refined imagery and delicate technique, features of Metsu's work from his Amsterdam years, has more in common with paintings like Ter Borch's *Young Woman at Her Toilet with a Maid* from about 1650 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in which the allusion to female vanity is far more subtly evoked, if not suppressed altogether.⁷ Yet the accouterments of a lady's toilette are absent from Metsu's picture. Thus, while the woman may invoke the pictorial tradition of seated women at their ablutions, her role in Metsu's novel composition exceeds this frame of reference.

To cast a different light on Metsu's conception of the woman we can turn to Italian paintings of seated women looking at their reflections in mirrors, which offer an alternative set of meanings to Dutch art's purported fixation on didacticism. Titian's *Venus with a Mirror*, or *Mellon Venus*, the most celebrated example of this tradition, is a mythological variant of his earlier toilette scene *Woman with a Mirror* [Figs. 11.6 & 11.7].⁸ The admiring male viewer present in the latter painting is implied in the *Mellon Venus*, for if we can see the goddess's face in the mirror, then she can see us.⁹ Although the picture remained in Titian's possession until his death, it was copied repeatedly, including by the Fleming Gillis Coignet and more famously, by Rubens, whose imaginative variant in the Liechtenstein collection shows Venus from the back, engaging provocatively with the beholder through the mediation of the mirror [Fig. 11.8].¹⁰ Whatever associations with female vanity may linger, the picture exalts the sensuous beauty of the nude Venus as a figure for the beauty of painting itself, which like the specular image that stands as its metaphor, presents an alluring likeness that remains forever beyond the grasp of the desiring male viewer.

6 Ibid., 42–43.

7 See Liedtke W., *Dutch Paintings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* 2 vols. (New Haven – London: 2007) I 63–64.

8 On Titian's *Mellon Venus* and Renaissance depictions of women with mirrors, see especially Cranston J., *The Muddled Mirror: Materiality and Figuration in Titian's Later Paintings* (University Park, PA: 2010) 21–31 and Goffen R., *Titian's Women* (New Haven – London: 1997) 133–138.

9 Shearman J., *Only Connect ... Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton: 1992) 228; Goffen, *Titian's Women* 136; and Cranston, *Muddled Mirror* 23.

10 Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight* 112, 145. For the numerous variants and copies of Titian's painting, see Wethey H.E., *The Paintings of Titian* (London: 1975) 68–70, nos. 51–53, L. 24–27.



FIGURE 11.5 *Gabriel Metsu, Woman at Her Toilet (ca. 1658). Oil on panel, 64.8 × 57.8 cm. Pasadena, CA.*

PHOTO: THE NORTON SIMON FOUNDATION.

The meta-pictorial potential of the subject of women with mirrors was certainly not lost on seventeenth-century Dutch artists. Hendrick Goltzius portrayed Venus gazing at her reflection in a mirror held by Cupid in his *Allegory of Visus and the Art of Painting*, engraved in about 1600, acknowledging Titian's prototype in this complex image which, as Sluijter demonstrated, allegorizes the



FIGURE 11.6 *Titian, Venus with a Mirror (Mellon Venus) (ca. 1555). Oil on canvas, 124.5 × 105.5 cm. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art.*
PHOTO: ART RESOURCE, NY.



FIGURE 11.7 *Titian, Woman with a Mirror (ca. 1515). Oil on canvas, 99 × 76 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre.*

PHOTO: GIANNI DAGLI ORTI / THE ART ARCHIVE AT ART RESOURCE, NY.



FIGURE 11.8 *Peter Paul Rubens, Venus in Front of the Mirror (ca. 1614–1615). Oil on panel, 123 × 98 cm. Liechtenstein, The Princely Collections, Vaduz-Vienna.*
 PHOTO: © LIECHTENSTEIN, THE PRINCELY COLLECTIONS, VADUZ-VIENNA/ SCALA, FLORENCE/ ART RESOURCE, NY (2017).

representation of consummate female beauty as the highest goal of art [Fig. 11.9].¹¹ In positioning the mirror directly below the painting on the artist's easel, Goltzius also elaborates on the affinity between pictorial and specular images proposed by Venetian precedent.¹² More directly relevant to Metsu's painting is Dou's rendering of a woman admiring her reflection in a mirror from 1667, which as Sluijter has also shown, thematizes pictorial seduction by analogizing painting and the mirror's reflective capacities [Fig. 11.10].¹³ Dou heightened the picture's erotic content by depicting the woman eyeing the beholder and including a wine cooler at the right and an open birdcage hanging overhead, which comment suggestively on the woman's availability. The mirror's function as a metaphor of painting is made unusually explicit and proprietary by Dou's inclusion of his 1663 *Self-Portrait* in the Nelson-Atkins Museum in the background (not visible in reproduction).¹⁴ Juxtaposing the woman's acknowledgment of the beholder's desiring gaze in the mirror's reflection with an assertion of his authorship of the picture's perfect mimesis, Dou alludes wittily to the mirror as the paradigm of painting. As Samuel van Hoogstraten famously wrote in 1678: '[...] een volmaekte Schildery is als een Spiegel van de Natuer, die de niet en zijn, doet schijnen te zijn, en op een geoorlofde, vermakelijke en prijslijke wijze bedriegt' ([...] a perfect painting is like a mirror of nature, making things that are not there appear to be, and which deceives one in a permissible, pleasurable, and praiseworthy way).¹⁵

11 Ibid., 87–159.

12 Ibid., 112, 145.

13 Ibid., 253. See also Sluijter E.J., "Een stuck waerin een jufr. voor de spiegel van Gerrit Douw", *Antiek* 23 (1988) 150–161 and Baer R. et al., *Gerrit Dou 1613–1675. Master Painter in the Age of Rembrandt* [exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Dulwich Picture Gallery, London; Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, The Hague] (New Haven – London: 2000–2001) 128, no. 32.

14 Baer et al., *Gerrit Dou* 118, no. 27. The *Self-Portrait* is seen in its original appearance, before its alteration after 1667.

15 Hoogstraten Samuel van, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilder-konst: anders de zichtbaere werelt* (Rotterdam, François van Hoogstraten: 1678) 25, quoted and translated in Sluijter, *Seductress* 252. As Sluijter notes and Walter Melion explores in depth, the comparison between a painting and a mirror is present in Karel van Mander's *Schilder-Boeck* of 1604. See Melion W.S., *Shaping the Netherlandish Canon. Karel van Mander's 'Schilder-Boeck'* (Chicago – London: 1991) 22, 134–135. Van Mander derived the concept from his teacher Lucas de Heere's ode to *The Ghent Altarpiece*, which he quotes. See Mander Karel van, *Het Schilder-Boeck* (Haarlem, Passchier van Wesbuch: 1604), fol. 201 recto: 'T'sijn spieghels, spieghels zijnt, neen t'zijn geen Tafereelen'. On the mirror as a metaphor of ideal painting in seventeenth-century Dutch art, see Sluijter, *Seductress* 90–99, 11–112, 116–118, 252–253; idem, "Een stuck waerin een jufr. voor de spiegel van Gerrit Douw" 150–161; and Brusati C., "Stilled Lives. Self-Portraiture and Self-Reflection in Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Still Life Painting", *Simiolus* 20 (1990–1991) 168–182.



FIGURE 11.9 Jan Saenredam after Hendrick Goltzius, *Allegory of Visus and the Art of Painting* (ca. 1600). Engraving, 24.4 × 18.4 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. PHOTO: RIJKSMUSEUM.



FIGURE 11.10 *Gerard Dou, A Young Woman at Her Toilet (1667). Oil on panel, 75.5 × 58 cm. Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.*

PHOTO: STUDIO TROMP, ROTTERDAM.

Metsu's London picture, however, is an amalgam of the pictorial type of the woman at her toilette with the conventional motifs of musical courtship [Fig. 11.1]. Otherwise unrelated image types, they do not cohere into a consistent narrative structure: the couple's disengagement resists assimilation into a recognizable scenario of elite courtship and disrupts its allegorization through the familiar metaphor of musical harmony. This tension revolves around the woman's preoccupation with her reflection in the mirror, which suspends narrative expectation and sets into motion her companion's exchange with the beholder, as if addressing his music of love to us. Metsu's unusual conception of the scene finds a parallel, I propose, in a discrete tradition of early modern poetry with deep pictorial implications: the poetic trope of the mirror as rival to the loving author's affections, which gained widespread currency throughout western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁶

The form is a species of the Petrarchan *topos* of the male suitor's frustrated desire for an unresponsive female beloved, which as Alison Kettering demonstrated was profoundly important to the development of Ter Borch's modern genre paintings of beautiful women and elegant courtship.¹⁷ The *topos* absorbs and recasts *vanitas* associations of women with mirrors into a vehicle for liberating the poet's creative subjectivity and an instrument of self-reflexivity. The conceit is often invoked as an interpretive framework for Italian and French Renaissance paintings of women with mirrors, but its relevance for Dutch art has yet to be fully explored.¹⁸ The structure of such poetry correlates well with Metsu's distinctive formulation of a musical courtship scene, as do the form's intensely pictorial language and self-reflexivity. The poetics of desire that animates both the literary form and Metsu's image offers insight into the self-reflexive dimensions of his embrace of elegant modern subjects of courtship and beautiful women, and in the process expands our understanding of the sources that shaped the self-aware character of Dutch realist artifice.

First we need to review the establishment of the mirror as rival to the suitor's affections as a *topos* of lyrical poetry. The trope originated in Petrarch's sonnet *Il mio adversario* (My Adversary) from the *Rime Sparse*, where he briefly offers himself as a substitute for his beloved Laura's mirror. Admonishing Laura's

16 On the relationship between the poetic trope of the mirror as rival and Vermeer's art, see Zell M., "Liefde baart kunst. Vermeer's Poetics of Painting", *Simiolus* 35 (2011) 153–163.

17 Kettering A.M., "Ter Borch's Ladies in Satin" (1993), in Franits W. (ed.), *Looking at Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art: Realism Reconsidered* (Cambridge: 1997) 98–115.

18 On Italian Renaissance paintings of women with mirrors in connection with the poetic *topos*, see Goodman-Soellner, "Poetic Interpretations of the 'Lady at Her Toilette'" 436–437; Cranston, *Poetics of Portraiture* 158–159; and idem, *Muddied Mirror* 21.

self-absorption in the mirror, Petrarch laments his displacement in her affections by the transient and ultimately deceptive image it reflects.¹⁹ In the wave of Petrarchism that swept western Europe beginning in the sixteenth century, poets elaborated repeatedly on the conceit, embracing the mirror as a rival for the lady's affections and enlisting it as a foil for the truer, perfected image of the beloved inscribed within the poet's heart and immortalized in his poetic verse. One such poem by Serafino dall'Aquila captures particularly well the jealous poet's plea to his beloved to turn away from the transient and false image of the mirror and discover her perfected reflection in his loving gaze. He writes, 'Now let go of the mirror and look at my eyes, For in me you will know who you are'.²⁰

By the mid-sixteenth century the trope had penetrated northern Europe and continued to spread thereafter. In 1647 Thomas Stanley deployed the conventional *vanitas* meaning of the mirror to comment on the true portrait of the beloved born from the poet's love. Stanley's poetic language is deeply pictorial: '[...] cast that glass away. / if thou dost desire thy form to view, / Look in my heart where Love thy picture drew; / And then, if pleased with thine own shape thou be, / Learn how to love thyself in loving me'.²¹

The *topos* appeared in Dutch amatory literature by way of the French sixteenth-century poet Clément Marot, whose works were often translated and emulated as models for modernizing Netherlandish poetry. One of his elegies that mobilizes the trope of the mirror arousing the lover's jealousy was published in the album *Thronus Cupidinis* (Cupid's Throne) of 1617, in both the French original and a Dutch translation. Marot implores his lady to avert her eyes from the mirror and find her perfect beauty mirrored most faithfully in his adoring heart:

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- 19 Goodman-Soellner, "Poetic Interpretations of the 'Lady at Her Toilette'" 436–437 and Cranston, *Poetics of Portraiture* 158–159. Petrarch's poem reads: 'My adversary in whom you are wont to see your eyes, which Love and Heaven honour, enamours you with beauties not his but sweet and happy beyond mortal guise. / By his counsel, Lady, you have driven me out of my sweet dwelling: miserable exile! Even though I may not be worthy to dwell where you alone are. / But if I had been nailed there firmly, a mirror should have made you, because you pleased yourself, harsh and proud to my harm. / Certainly, if you remember Narcissus, this and that course lead to one goal—although the grass is unworthy of such a flower'. See Petrarch's *Lyrical Poems. The 'Rime Sparse' and Other Lyrics*, ed. – trans. R.M. Durling (Cambridge: 1976) 111.
- 20 Cranston, *Poetics of Portraiture* 159–160 (translation of Serafino 160). For the original Italian text, see Bauer-Formiconi B. (ed.), *Die Strambotti des Serafino dall'Aquila* (Munich: 1967) 204.
- 21 See Sainsbury G. (ed.), *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*, 3 vols. (Oxford: 1905) I 102–103, quoted in Kerrigan W. – Braden G., *The Idea of the Renaissance* (Baltimore: 1989) 247, n. 20.

[...] there is no mirror, which will be, or ever was
 That can show perfectly
 Your living beauty: But [...]
 If your eyes clearer than this crystal,
 Would see my loyal heart ...,
 They would find imprinted there,
 Your beautiful face from life:
 Similar with your beauty,
 You would see my loyalty.²²

Following the lead of Italian, French, and English poetic traditions, Dutch poetics thus refashioned the *vanitas* convention of female self-involvement to underscore poetry's capacity to represent ideal physical and moral beauty. The *topos* is also present in Dutch emblematics. P.C. Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* (Love Emblems) from 1611, a major vehicle through which Petrarchism was popularized,²³ includes one emblem entitled 'Van uj mijn licht' (From you,

22 See *Thronus Cupidinis* (Amsterdam, Willem Jansz: 1620) n.p. (1 6 a): 'Het is wel waer, en ick weet voor ghewis, / Datter noyt Spieghel was, comen zal, noch is, / Die u nae't leven zoo conde toonen juyst / V schoonhey, maer ghelooft voor vuyst, / Waert dat u ooghen veel claerder als Cristael, / Zaghen mijn herte ghetrou en zonder fael, / Zy zouden daer in ghedruct vinden te wezen, / Nae't leven u schoonhey, die zeer wordt gheprezen: / En aen u schoonhey zouden zy zien gheknocht, / Mijn ghetrouwen dienst t'uwert, zo ghy hebt verzocht, / Ende dat ziende zoo mochten u edel sinnen, / My daerom een weynich te meer beminnen.' For Marot's original, see Marot Clément, *Oeuvres poétiques complètes*, ed. G. Defaux, 2 vols. (Paris: 1990–1993) I 263: 'Il est bien vray, et tiens pour seureté, / Qu'il n'est Myroir, ne sera, n'a esté, / Qui sceust au vif monstren parfaitement / Vostre beaulté: mais croyez seurement, / Si voz yeux clers plus que ce Crystallin, / Veissent moncueur feal, & non maling, / Ilz trouveroient là dedans imprimée, / Au naturel vostre face estimée. / Semblablement avec vostre beaulté, / Vous y verriez la mienne loyauté, / Et la voyant, vostre gentil courage / Pourroit m'aymer quelcque poinct d'avantage.' My thanks to Deborah Kahn for assistance with the French translation. On the *Thronus Cupidinus*, see Fontaine Verwey H. de la, "The 'Thronus Cupidinis'", *Quaerendo* 8 (1978) 29–44, and the same author's introduction to the facsimile edition of Bredero Gerbrand Adriaensz, *Thronus Cupidinis: Verzameling van emblemata en gedichten*, ed. H. de la Fontaine Verwey (Amsterdam: 1968). On Anthony van Dyck's possible adaptation of one of the book's illustrations in a drawing, see Franits W., "Anthony van Dyck and the 'Thronus Cupidinis'", *Master Drawings* 31 (1993) 279–83.

23 Hooft Pieter Cornelisz, *Emblemata amatoria*, ed. K. Porteman (Leiden: 1983) 16–29 and Forster L., *The Icy Fire: Five Studies in European Petrarchism* (Cambridge: 1969) 54. See also Kettering, "Ladies in Satin" 105.



FIGURE 11.11 Van u mijn Licht' engraving in Pieter Cornelisz Hooft's *Emblemata amatoria* (Amsterdam: 1611) emblem 24, fol. 59. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek.
 PHOTO: KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK.

my light) [Fig. 11.11]:²⁴ here a man, inspired by Cupid, takes the mirror from a lady and offers himself as a substitute, visualizing the poet-lover's ability to generate a truer portrait of his beloved's perfections than the superficial image reflected in the mirror. In Dutch poetics, then, the mirror's associations with female vanity coexisted with an affirmation of the poet's ability to capture his beloved's true image through a devotion to art.

24 The emblem's accompanying mottoes and verses reiterate the mirror's role as a metaphor for the ideal love of the poet for his beloved, identified in the French verse as a Petrarchan 'belle guerriere' (beautiful warrior): 'The sun gilds the moon with a silver face: / So do I borrow from you, my love, my light'; 'The Icy moon receives pure color from her brother / So also my mistress's color is alive on my face'; 'As Phoebe (the Moon) receives its light from the Sun, so do I receive strength from my beautiful warrior'. 'De Son verguldt de Maen haer silv'ren aenghezicht: Dus houd' ick oock te leen, van u mijn Lief, mijn licht'; 'Purum a fratre capit glacialis Luna colorem. Ac Dominae color est vivus in ore meo'; 'Comme Phoebe reçoit du Soleil sa lumiere, Ainsi fay-ie & vigueur de ma belle guerriere'. See <http://emblems.let.uu.nl/h161124.html>.

Metsu's juxtaposition in the London painting of the woman's captivation with her reflection in the mirror and the man's address to the viewer translates this poetic conceit into pictorial form [Fig. 11.1]: displaced from the woman's affections by the mirror's superficial reflection of her appearance, her companion turns to the beholder as he prepares to play his music of unrequited love. In positioning the man directly in front of and in fact framed by the canvas in the background, Metsu signals the mutuality of painting and poetry as equivalent artistic undertakings, inspired by love.

That Metsu subscribed to the famous Horatian dictum 'Ut pictura poesis' (As is painting, so is poetry), is confirmed by his lost *Self-Portrait in the Studio*, known only through copies [Fig. 11.12]. Waiboer convincingly identifies the female instrumentalist in all'antica dress as Terpsichore, one of the ancient Greek muses who presides over the arts and serves as inspiration for artists.²⁵ Van Hoogstraten calls Terpsichore the "Poetess" in the illustration to chapter six of his treatise on painting, depicting her strumming a lute as painters and assistants labour to the sound of her inspirational music [Fig. 11.13]. Of course, Dutch art theorists had long espoused the *paragone* between painting and poetry, partly to dignify painting by association with the far more intellectually esteemed art of poetry: as Van Hoogstraten advised: 'Dewijl ook Poëzy met de Schilderkonst in veel dingen gelijk loopt, zoo zal't onze Schilderjeugt geoorloft zijn, met het stomme penseel, de spreekende penne der dichters te volgen' (Since Poetry and Painting follow similar paths in many things, it is well for our Youthful Painters to follow, with their mute brushes, the speaking pen of poets).²⁶ By specifically identifying the poetess Terpsichore as his muse, Metsu transforms the studio scene into a declaration of his identification with a poeticized construct of artistic inspiration.

The unusual conception of the London picture evolved from Metsu's further reflection on the poetic underpinnings of his art [Fig. 11.1]. In this case the reference is a more precise meditation on the interrelated themes of love, desire, and absence shared by the literary and pictorial arts. The metaphorical allusion to imitation in the poetic trope of the mirror as adversary offered Metsu a vehicle with which to articulate his larger ambitions and the virtue of

25 Waiboer, *Gabriel Metsu: Life and Work* 60. On the painting, see also Raupp H.J., "Musik im Atelier: Darstellungen musizierender Künstler in der niederländischen Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts", *Oud Holland* 92 (1978) 117–120.

26 Hoogstraten, *Inleyding* 193, quoted and translated in Jongh E. de, "Frans van Mieris: Questions of Understanding", in Buvelot Q. et al., *Frans van Mieris. 1635–1681* [exh. cat., Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.] (Zwolle: 2005) 217–218, n. 64.



FIGURE 11.12 *Gabriel Metsu, copy after, Self-Portrait in the Studio (ca. 1658). Support unknown, 41.9 × 31.1 cm. Location unknown.*

PHOTO: RKD NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR ART HISTORY.



FIGURE 11.13 *Samuel van Hoogstraten, Terpsichore, engraving, 15.4 × 11.7 cm, in Van Hoogstraten's Inledyding tot de hooghe schoole der schilderkonst: anders de zichtbaere werelt. (Rotterdam: 1678), chapter 6, fol. 215. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek. PHOTO: KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK.*

his art. Juxtaposing the woman's self-absorption with the mirror and the male suitor placed in front of the framed painting, Metsu draws a parallel between painting and poetry that enlarges the terms of the comparison by indicating that his painting, like the poet's verses, is not merely a faithful replication of nature, but an act of mimetic artifice motivated by his love of art. However compelling his painted fiction, Metsu asserts its distinction from the passive, external, and impermanent image reflected in the mirror. Similarly to the lyric tradition in which the reader is addressed as a lover, moreover, the man turns to the viewer as he prepares to play his music of unrequited love. Love, then, is the inspiration for Metsu's stunning performance of mimetic artistry that defies the mirror's superficial reflection.

With this pointed reference, Metsu declares that his work is a labour of love, the ideal of art production in the Senecan triad of artistic motivations, traditionally privileged over the pursuit of profit and fame.²⁷ According to Van Mander, Cornelis Ketel allegorized these three *topoi* of inspiration for art in a now lost drawing and penned an accompanying poem that clarified the primacy of love and 'aengheboren lust' (inborn desire) for the creation of art. In the verses, Ketel asserts that while the desire for money can lead the artist to greed and the pursuit of fame to idleness, the love of art alone 'daer toe drijft voort met cracht' (urges him constantly with arduous strength) to become a virtuous practitioner worthy of riches and fame.²⁸ As Van Hoogstraten later contended, the practice of painting, unlike the mechanical arts, is its own reward and so is to be loved for its own sake. Fame and profit will accrue to the artist for his efforts, but the love of art for its own sake distinguishes his creative labour as a truly dignified pursuit.²⁹ As Joanna Woodall has argued

27 See Woodall J., "Love is in the Air: *Amor* as Motivation and Message in Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Painting", *Art History* 19 (1996) 208–246; Brusati C., *Artifice and Illusion: The Art and Writing of Samuel van Hoogstraten* (Chicago – London: 1995) 213, 253; Gaskell I., *Vermeer's Wager: Speculations on Art History, Theory and Art Museums* (London: 2000), esp. 62–65; Chapman H.P., "Cornelis Ketel, Fingerpainter and Poet-Painter", *Nederland Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 59 (2009) 265; and Chapman H.P. – Woodall J., "Introduction: 'The Netherlander has intelligence in his hand'", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 59 (2009), esp. 7–21, 37.

28 Mander, *Schilder-Boeck* fol. 276 recto, quoted in Woodall, "Love is in the Air" 219–220. Translation from Miedema H., *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters, from the First Edition of the 'Schilder-Boeck' (1603–1604)*, 6 vols. (Doornspijk: 1994–1999) 1:362 (fol. 276 recto). See also Chapman, "Cornelis Ketel" 265.

29 Hoogstraten, *Inleyding* 345–351. See Gaskell, *Vermeer's Wager* 64. Van Hoogstraten also depicted the Senecan motivations of money, fame, and love on the outside of his *Peepshow with Views of the Interior of a Dutch House* (London, National Gallery) and in the

persuasively, Van Hoogstraten modified somewhat the competition between these three *topoi* to reconcile the artist's pursuit of profit and honour with the desire for virtue.³⁰ She also shows that Van Hoogstraten and other Dutch artists adapted the ideal of Amor as motivation to articulate *burgerlijk* virtues, translating the concept into a vernacular idiom in scenes of domesticity.³¹ In the London picture, Metsu expresses this idealized and distinctively Dutch version of the painter's vocation through the poetic trope of the mirror as rival, bringing vividly to life the social ideal's embodiment in the Dutch *topos* 'Liefde baart kunst', or Love gives birth to art.³²

The suitor's first-person address becomes all the more resonant if he is recognized as a portrait of Metsu himself, as has been suggested.³³ The figure bears a strong resemblance to Metsu's self-portraits, including a formal self-image in the Royal Collection, a small self-portrait in Louisville, which according to Waiboer is a copy of a lost original,³⁴ and *Self-Portrait with the Artist's Wife Isabella de Wolff in a Tavern* from 1661 in Dresden, among other works [Figs. 11.14 & 11.15]. Like Jan Steen³⁵ and Frans van Mieris the Elder, who included his own features in no fewer than 31 paintings,³⁶ Metsu often used his own likeness to fashion his artistic persona and comment reflexively on the truth claims of his work. The most unusual example of Metsu's heightened self-referentiality is the truly weird *Hunter Getting Dressed after Bathing* from 1654–1656 in a private collection, where Metsu parades in his birthday

drawing *Allegory of Painting and Its Benefits* (Paris, Musée Nissim de Camondo). See further Brusati, *Artifice and Illusion* 213, 253–256.

30 Woodall, "Love is in the Air" 216, 235–236.

31 Ibid., 208–246.

32 For the motto's ancient roots and its importance in seventeenth-century Dutch art and art theory, see Jongh, *Portretten van echt en trouw* 57–59, 274–278; Woodall, "Love is in the Air" 220; Gaskell, *Vermeer's Wager* 63–74; and Chapman, "Cornelis Ketel" 265.

33 Maclaren N., *The Dutch School: National Gallery Catalogues* (London: 1960) 242, identifies the figures as the same models that appear in Metsu's *Self-Portrait with the Artist's Wife Isabella de Wolff in a Tavern* from 1661 (Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister) (Fig. 11.15).

34 Waiboer, *Gabriel Metsu: Life and Work* 286, no. B-18.

35 See Chapman P.H., "Jan Steen's Household Revisited", *Simiolus* 20 (1990–1991) 183–196; idem, "Persona and Myth in Houbraken's Life of Jan Steen", *The Art Bulletin* 75 (1993) 135–150; and idem, "Jan Steen, Player in His Own Paintings", in Chapman P.H. – Kloek W.T. – Wheelock, Jr. A.K. et al., Janson G. (ed.), *Jan Steen. Painter and Storyteller* [exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam] (New Haven – London: 1996–1997) 11–23.

36 Naumann O., *Frans van Mieris The Elder (1635–1681)*, 2 vols. (Doornspijk: 1981) 1 126.



FIGURE 11.14 *Follower of Gabriel Metsu?, Self-Portrait (ca. 1658). Oil on panel, 21.7 × 17.5 cm. Louisville, KY, Speed Art Museum.*
 PHOTO: SPEED ART MUSEUM.

suit seemingly to embody, as it were, the naked truth of his perfect mimesis. Placing himself in the London picture directly in front of a large painting in an ornate gilded frame, Metsu thus calls attention to the self-consciously performative nature of the compellingly *naer het leven* or true-to-life scene enacted within the picture itself.

Not only does the man appear to be Metsu himself, but the woman who gazes into the mirror is likely a portrait of Isabella de Wolff, whom Metsu



FIGURE 11.15 *Gabriel Metsu, Self-Portrait with the Artist's Wife Isabella de Wolff in a Tavern (1661). Oil on panel, 35.5 × 30.5 cm. Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister.*

PHOTO: BPK BERLIN / STAATLICHE KUNSTSAMMLUNGEN,
GEMÄLDEGALERIE ALTE MEISTER / HANS-PETER KLUT / ART RESOURCE,
NY.



FIGURE 11.16 *Follower of Gabriel Metsu?*, Portrait of the Artist's Wife, Isabella de Wolff (ca. 1658). Oil on panel, 21.6 × 17.4 cm. Louisville, KY, Speed Art Museum. PHOTO: SPEED ART MUSEUM.

married in 1658, probably the same year in which the painting was executed.³⁷ The identification is based on her portrait, which Metsu painted as a pendant to his self-portrait in Louisville, both of which Waiboer identifies as copies of lost originals [Fig. 11.16].³⁸ Isabella was the daughter of Maria de Grebber,

37 Renckens B.J.A. – Duyvetter J., “Gabriel Metsu, Isabella de Wolff, Geboortig van Enkhuizen”, *Oud Holland* 74 (1959) 179–182.

38 Waiboer, *Gabriel Metsu: Life and Work* 286, and no. B-19.

an esteemed artist in her own right, who came from a distinguished family of Haarlem painters. According to Waiboer, Isabella served as a model for more than a dozen of Metsu's paintings, including *The Artist as the Prodigal Son* from 1661, where she is dressed in the fashion of her native Enkhuizen [Fig. 11.15].³⁹ Isabella also makes an appearance in two other *Toilette* pictures from the mid-1660s, offering the most direct and persuasive connection with the London painting's woman gazing at her reflection in the mirror [Fig. 11.17].⁴⁰

Metsu was hardly unique in casting his wife as the object of his affection, and was likely responding to and sustaining the impulse among some *liefhebbers* (serious collectors or art lovers) to identify portraits of painters' beloveds, an impulse already present in Van Mander's *Schilder-Boeck* of 1604.⁴¹ Metsu doubtless would have been aware of fellow Leidener Frans van Mieris's use of his wife Cunera de Cock as a model. In fact, one quarter of Van Mieris's surviving works feature portraits of himself and/or his wife,⁴² including a highly finished drawing on vellum from about 1658 [Fig. 11.18].⁴³ Similar to Metsu's painting, and probably executed in the same year, Van Mieris's drawing presents the painter as a musical suitor looking knowingly at the viewer and his wife as the elegant woman singing from a songbook. In depicting themselves as husbands and lovers alongside their wives, as Erin Griffey has shown, Dutch artists such as Metsu and Van Mieris effectively domesticated the theme of love as inspiration for art.⁴⁴

Only a select audience would have recognized artists' portraits of themselves and their spouses.⁴⁵ But as Stephanie Dickey has observed, the phenomenon was widespread enough for Gerard de Lairesse to complain about it in 1707,

39 Ibid., 59.

40 On Metsu's paintings depicting a woman at her toilette for which Isabella served as model, see Waiboer, *Gabriel Metsu: Life and Work* 131–132, nos. A-120–121.

41 Van Mander, for example, identifies the model for Hugo van der Goes's Old Testament painting of David and Abigail as a woman with whom he was in love (Mander, *Schilder-Boeck* fol. 203 verso). Cited in Woodall, "Love is in the Air" 251 and Griffey E., "Pro-Creativity. Art, Love and Conjugal Virtue in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Artists' Self-Portraits", *Dutch Crossing* 28 (2004) 34. See also Chapman – Woodall, "Introduction" 20–21.

42 Naumann, *Frans van Mieris* 1126–127 and Buvelot Q. et al., *Frans van Mieris. 1635–1681* [exh. cat., Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.] (Zwolle: 2005) 114, no. 15.

43 Buvelot et al., *Frans van Mieris* 124, no. 18.

44 Griffey, "Pro-Creativity" 27–66.

45 Chapman, "Jan Steen, Player in His Own Paintings" 12, notes that regular face-to-face interactions between Dutch painters and their clients would have facilitated recognition of artists' self-portraits in their genre paintings.



FIGURE 11.17 *Gabriel Metsu, Woman at the Mirror (ca. 1664–1666). Oil on panel, 23.7 × 19.5 cm. Paris, Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris.*

PHOTO: © PETIT PALAIS / ROGER-VIOLETT.



FIGURE 11.18 *Frans van Mieris the Elder, The Duet (ca. 1658). Black chalk and brush in grey on vellum, 22.2 × 17.8 cm. Amsterdam Museum.*

PHOTO: COLLECTION AMSTERDAM MUSEUM.

grumbling that Dutch painters used their wives as models, even if they were ‘ever so ugly’.⁴⁶ There is also documentary evidence, beyond the popularity of

46 Dickey S., “Rembrandt and Saskia: Art, Commerce, and the Poetics of Portraiture”, in Chong A. – Zell M. (eds.), *Rethinking Rembrandt* (Zwolle: 2002), 27, citing Lairese Gerard De, *Groot Schilderboek* 2 vols. (Amsterdam, Willem de Coup: 1707) I 173: ‘wordende hier

self-portraits by prominent painters, of an appreciation for pictures of artist's wives among *liefhebbers*. A 1672 Leiden inventory of one of Van Mieris's most important patrons includes several *tronies* identified as portrayals of the artist and Cunera, indicating, as Sluijter observed, that the recognition of a model's personal relationship with a famous painter enhanced a picture's value.⁴⁷ Van Mieris's and Metsu's frequent inclusion of likenesses of themselves and their spouses in their compositions therefore likely addressed familiars who comprised relatively small, inner circles of the artists' patrons and collectors.

Metsu's lost *Self-Portrait in the Studio* was directly inspired by Van Mieris's own lost *Artist's Studio* from about 1655–1657, which similarly depicts an exchange between a painter and his female model [Fig. 11.19]. Cunera's features have been identified in the woman who fixes her gaze on us from the portrait on which the painter works, and the artist talking with her is Van Mieris himself.⁴⁸ The Cupid suspended from the ceiling signals, as Sluijter demonstrated, the female model's role as inspiration for the creation of beguiling works of art that arouse the admiration of art lovers.⁴⁹ With implicit allusions to the legendary tales of Apelles painting the beautiful Campaspe and St. Luke painting the Virgin, and in highly self-referential terms, Van Mieris presents the painter as motivated preeminently by love, rather than merely pursuit of fame or profit. Staging the *topos* of 'Liefde baart kunst' (Love gives birth to art) as a plausible interlude in his own studio, Van Mieris personalizes the reference by portraying his wife as his model, his muse, and a figure of perfect painting. Cunera enacts this dual role more explicitly in Van Mieris's tiny but celebrated *The Art of Painting* or *Pictura* from 1661, an allegory of painting in which she holds the

in zulk een yver en uitsteekende vlyt getoond, dat den een tot dien einde het wezen van zyne Vrouw, daar men nochtans de leelykheid wat in over 't hoofd dehoorde te zien, op 't krachtigste met all hare sproeten en vlekken afmaalt'. (Such is their zeal and extraordinary pains, that one paints for that end the air of his wife, though ever so ugly, with all her freckles and pimples very exactly, whereby the agreeableness of a beautiful woman's face is quite lost). See also Chapman, "Jan Steen, Player in His Own Paintings" 18 and idem, "Persona and Myth in Houbraeken's Life of Jan Steen" 148–149.

47 Dickey, "Rembrandt and Saskia" 28, referring to a 1672 Leiden inventory of François de la Boë Sylvius. See further Sluijter E.J., "'All in General Striving to Adorn their Houses with Costly Peeeces': Two Case Studies of Paintings in Wealthy Interiors", in Westermann M. et al., *Art and Home: Dutch Interiors in the Age of Rembrandt* [exh. cat., Denver Art Museum Denver; Newark Museum, Newark] (Zwolle: 2001–2002) 110 and Sluijter E.J. et al., *Leidse fijnschilders. Van Gerrit Dou tot Frans van Mieris de Jonge, 1630–1760* [exh. cat., Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden] (Zwolle: 1988) 133.

48 Waiboer, *Gabriel Metsu: Life and Work* 60.

49 Sluijter E.J., "Vermeer, Fame, and Female Beauty: The Art of Painting", in Gaskell I. – Jonker M. (eds.), *Vermeer Studies* (New Haven – London: 1998), esp. 273.



FIGURE 11.19 *Frans van Mieris the Elder, The Artist's Studio (ca. 1655–1657). Oil on panel, 59.5 × 47cm. Formerly Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister (lost during World War II).*

PHOTO: SLUB DRESDEN / DEUTSCHE FOTOHEK.

tools of a painter and wears around her neck a gold chain with a mask, a conventional allusion to painting's imitative capacities [Fig. 11.20].⁵⁰ In the *Artist's Studio* Van Mieris therefore gives visual form to the poeticized discourse of painting articulated by Dutch art theorists who embraced the thematics of love treatises and lyrical poetry.⁵¹ Adriaen van de Venne, for instance, wrote in 1623 that painting is a '[...] soeten const [...] / Dat door haer wert gemaect van niet een soete lief' ([...] a sweet art [...] / That creates out of nothing a beloved sweetheart [...]).⁵² And in 1678 Van Hoogstraten affirmed that the most important quality for a painter is 'Dat hy niet alleen schijne de konst te beminnen, maer dat hy in der daet, in der aerdicheden der bevallijke natuur uit te beelden, verlief is' (that he not only appear to adore art, but that he is in love with representing the pleasures of beautiful nature).⁵³

Waiboer has confirmed the traditional identification of the female instrumentalist in Metsu's lost painting as a portrait of his wife Isabella [Fig. 11.16].⁵⁴ If the identification is correct, she plays the role of Terpsichore, the poetess-muse of artists. Metsu's depiction of Isabella as the inspiration of his refined modern genre paintings would have appealed to discriminating *liefhebbers*, some of whom would have recognized Metsu and his new wife; given the self-referential subject matter, others may have assumed that the model was personally related to the painter. In either case, the painting is more than an uxorious tribute to Isabella or the domestication of the *topos* of 'Liefde baart kunst' to visualize the virtuous motivations of art. In casting her as Terpsichore, Metsu asserts the affinities between poetry and painting and specifically his creation of a *visual* poetics of desire.

The London picture builds on Metsu's practice of casting himself and his wife as actors in his paintings in order to craft a poetics of desire in pictorial form, to dramatize, in other words, 'Ut pictora amor' [Fig. 11.1]. Assigning to himself and his wife the roles of jealous lover and preoccupied beloved from the poetic

50 On the painting, see most recently Buvelot et al., *Frans van Mieris* 148–150, no. 27.

51 On this discourse, see especially Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight* 131–144 and idem, "Vermeer, Fame, and Female Beauty" 271–277.

52 Venne Adriaen van de, "Zeeusche mey-clacht: ofte schynkycker", in Venne Jan Pietersz van de, *Zeeusche nachtegael ende des selfs dryderly gesang* (Middelburg, Jan Pietersz van de Venne: 1623) 59, quoted and translated in Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight* 12 and idem, "Vermeer, Fame, and Female Beauty" 274.

53 Hoogstraten, *Inleyding* 11–12, quoted and translated in Sluijter, "Vermeer, Fame, and Female Beauty" 283 n. 78.

54 Waiboer, *Gabriel Metsu: Life and Work* 59–60.



FIGURE 11.20 *Frans van Mieris the Elder, Pictura (An Allegory of Painting) (1661). Oil on copper, 12.7 × 8.9 cm. Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum.*

PHOTO: THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM.

trope of the mirror as rival, Metsu articulates the idea that Amor inspires his feats of delicate mimetic artifice. The interrelated themes of love, desire, and absence that defined the highly conventionalized and gendered discourse of early modern theories of both the pictorial and literary arts thus are brought vividly to life. By imaginatively adapting the role prescribed for women in this discourse as instruments of the male artist's ambitions and figures of beautiful painting, Metsu also underscores his ability to exceed the transient image reflected on the surface of the mirror and lay claim to immanent, transcendent truth. His achievement of this ideal mimesis seems to have been addressed especially to collectors capable of recognizing Metsu and Isabella as the models for the painting's disconnected couple. For these *liefhebbers* the picture offered a dignified and poeticized alternative artistic persona to the later *Self-Portrait with the Artist's Wife Isabella de Wolff in a Tavern*, in which Metsu plays the more familiar part of the rogue, carousing with Isabella, following the celebrated precedents of Hans von Aachen's so-called *Donna Venusta* and Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait with Saskia as the Prodigal Son* [Fig. 11.15].⁵⁵

Metsu's curious placement of the mirror on the windowsill may point to an older, even more prestigious precedent for his canvas within Netherlandish pictorial tradition. The juxtaposition of the mirror and window, the two pre-eminent paradigms of painting in early modern art theory, recalls a similar arrangement in Jan van Eyck's lost *Woman at Her Toilet*, known through copies [Fig. 11.21].⁵⁶ The famous panel, which Van Mander praises as being painted 'net en vlijtich',⁵⁷ depicts two women—one nude, the other clothed—standing next to a convex mirror hanging from the central bar of a window. In 1628 Willem van Haecht included it among the treasures displayed in *The Gallery of Cornelis van der Geest*, hanging at the back of the room on the right wall directly above copies or casts of ancient statues of the nude goddesses

55 Hans von Aachen, *Donna Venusta* (private collection, Italy) and Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait with Saskia as the Prodigal Son* (Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister). On self-portraits as profligates and prodigal sons, see Chapman H.P., *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits. A Study in Seventeenth-Century Identity* (Princeton: 1990) 118; idem, "Jan Steen's Household Revisited" 196; and Cartwright L., *'Hoe Schilder Hoe Wilder': Dissolute Self-Portraits in Seventeenth-Century Dutch and Flemish Art* (PhD dissertation, University of Maryland, 2007).

56 My thanks to Rodney Nevitt for recognizing the connection with Jan Van Eyck's picture, and to Jonathan Unglaub and Natasha Seaman for pointing out the window's significance as a reference to the pictorial paradigm.

57 Mander, *Schilder-Boeck* fol. 202 recto: 'een baed-stove, die seer net en vlijtich ghedaen was'.



FIGURE 11.21 *Willem van Haecht, Woman at Her Toilet (1628), copy of a lost painting by Jan van Eyck. Detail of Fig. 11.22.*

© RUBENSHUIS PHOTO: BART HUYSMANS AND MICHEL WUYTS.



FIGURE 11.22 *Willem van Haecht, The Gallery of Cornelis van der Geest (1628). Oil on panel, 102.5 × 137.5 cm. Antwerp, Rubenshuis.*

© RUBENSHUIS PHOTO: BART HUYSMANS AND MICHEL WUYTS.

Ceres and Venus [Fig. 11.22].⁵⁸ After Van der Geest's death in 1638, the panel entered the collection of its last known owner, Peeter Stevens, who appears among the *liefhebbers*, artists, and distinguished guests assembled in Van der Geest's gallery in Van Haecht's painting. Significantly, the 1668 sales catalogue of Stevens's collection identifies the picture as 'Le Bain-tres-renomé, en lequel van Eyck a depeint le Pourtraict de sa femme nuë & vétue [...]' (The very famous Bath, in which Van Eyck painted the portrait of his wife nude and

58 See Held J., "Artis Pictoriae Amator": An Antwerp Art Patron and His Collection" (1957); Addendum (1957); Postscript (1979)", in Lowenthal A. – Rosand D. – Walsh, Jr. J. (eds.), *Rubens and His Circle: Studies by Julius Held* (Princeton: 1982) 43–50, 57–58. Held interpreted the panel as a depiction of Giovanna Cenami in ritual ablution either before or after her marriage to Giovanni Arnolfini, suggesting that it may originally have served as a cover to Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Wedding*. Seidel L., *Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait: Stories of an Icon* (Cambridge: 1993) 206–218, elaborates on Held's interpretation.

dressed [...]).⁵⁹ Thus in the seventeenth century *Woman at Her Toilet* was mythicized as an image of Van Eyck's wife Margaret, conjoining the display of consummate artistry with an artist's portrayal of his wife. Metsu's mirror-window combination seems to allude to Van Eyck's celebrated panel, and his replacement of the convex mirror with a flat, framed mirror that resembles a painting indicates the meta-pictorial dimensions of his reference. By invoking the lost masterpiece, Metsu situated his artistic talents and mimetic skills within Van Mander's heroic narrative of the Netherlandish canon while perhaps also signaling a parallel between his depiction of his wife Isabella and Van Eyck's portrayal of his beloved, Margaret. Seen in this way, Metsu's highly personal formulation of the poetic trope of the mirror as adversary becomes an elegant statement of his art's distinguished lineage, and inspiration.

Whether or not Metsu alludes to Van Eyck's lost panel and its identification as an image of Margaret van Eyck, the exceptionally intimate performance of his poetic artistic persona finds a counterpart in a poem by the sixteenth-century Ghent painter and poet Lucas de Heere, Van Mander's master. In 1565 D'Heere published a verse on a lost portrait of his wife, the learned Eleonora Carboniers, which draws on the *topos* of the inadequacy of the painted likeness compared to the loving image inscribed upon the author-artist's heart:

Ic zend' u (lief) u figure present
 Biddende, neemtse in dancke geheel,
 Al en is de conste niet excellent:
 Nochtans wild' ic in uws herten tafereel,
 Zoo wel geschildert wesen, met tpinceel
 Van Cupido, dien meester verheuen:
 Die u in mijn herte schilderde naer d'leuen.⁶⁰

(I send you, beloved, your portrait as a gift,
 Although the art is not of outstanding quality.
 Nevertheless I wish to be as well painted
 In the painting of your heart with the brush

59 See Briels J., "Amator Pictoriae Artis. De Antwerpse kunstverzamelaar Peeter Stevens (1590–1668) en zijn Constkamer", *Jaarboek ven het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (1980) 223 and Grossmann F., "Cornelis van Dalem Re-examined", *Burlington Magazine* 96 (1954), 46 n. 15. See further Dhanens E., *Hubert and Jan van Eyck* (New York: 1980) 206–207, and Thøfner M., "Helena Fourment's *Het Pelsken*", *Art History* 27 (2004) 10–12.

60 Heere Lucas de, *Den Hof en Boomgaard der Poësie*, ed. W. Waterschoot (Zwolle: 1969) 40, no. XXII, quoted and translated in Ramakers B., "Art and Artistry in Lucas de Heere", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 59 (2009) 183.

Of Cupid, that supreme master,
Who painted you in my heart from life.)

Like the painter-poet De Heere, Metsu marshals the conventionalized language of lyrical poetry to invoke an ideal image of his wife but differs by proffering his painting as the embodiment of ideal mimesis. For familiars who recognized Metsu's self-portrait, the painting's reality effects would have been heightened and awareness of his creative process intensified. Those viewers who also recognized Isabella might even have conferred on her a degree of agency absent from the trope's figure of the distracted female beloved. Just as De Heere's readers knew that his wife Eleonora was an accomplished poet who contributed to her husband's publications, cultured *liefhebbers* would have known Isabella's artistic pedigree as the daughter of a famous painter.⁶¹ It is possible, then, that Isabella's absorption in the mirror's reflection could have served a double purpose, depending on the viewer's inclinations: a reference to the *topos* of the mirror as the male poet-painter's rival as well as to an expanded version of the trope in which the woman becomes a responsive lover, looking not at her own reflection but a perfected image of her beloved within herself.⁶² If seen from Isabella's vantage point as Metsu's artistic partner, the painting potentially disrupts the conventional poetic structure by mobilizing the Platonic conception of the mirror as a metaphor for the resemblance between lover and beloved.⁶³ Isabella might thus be seen to accede to the poet-painter's desire to be, in De Heere's words to Eleonora, 'as well painted / In the painting of your heart with the brush / Of Cupid, that supreme master, who painted you in my heart from life.'

In any case, Metsu, looking directly out of the canvas while adjusting the pegs of his violin, actively solicits the attention of these sophisticated and familiar beholders. Framed emphatically by the picture before which he stands, Metsu signals that the recital about to begin is a performance of the art of painting. Perhaps the viola da gamba on the table angled to project toward the viewer is a subtle invitation to such *liefhebbers*—literally art lovers—to join him in a duet devoted to their mutual love of art. If so, Metsu's address

61 A poem by Eleonora and her translation of a French sonnet by her husband are included in *Den Hof en Boomgaerd der Poësie*. See Heere, *Den Hof en Boomgaerd der Poësie* 2, no. 111, 53, no. XLVII and Ramakers, "Art and Artistry in Lucas de Heere" 167, 181.

62 My thanks to Walter Melion for this suggestion.

63 Plato in his *Phaedrus* describes the loving gaze as: 'like one who has caught a disease of the eye from another, he cannot account for it, not realizing that his lover is as it were a mirror in which he beholds himself.' See Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. H.N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA – London: 1977) 255d. On the role of this Platonic *topos* in Italian Renaissance poetic and pictorial traditions, see Cranston, *Poetics of Portraiture* 160–163.

acknowledges that this aestheticized social ideal confers distinction on both himself and those with the discernment to appreciate inspired performances of pictorial mimesis.

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PART 5

Portrayals of Spousal Love



What's Love Got to Do with It? Unlacing the Love Knots in Margaret of Austria's Royal Monastery at Brou

Laura D. Gelfand

love is held by a chain of obligation [...].

MACHIAVELLI¹



Setting the Stage

In 1501 a medal was struck commemorating the union of Margaret of Austria (1480–1530) and Philibert II of Savoy (1480–1504), [Fig. 12.1]. Set against a field patterned with flowers and love knots are the bust-length profile portraits of the young couple, and on the reverse is a shield adorned with the impaled arms of Savoy and Austria beneath a large love knot with smaller knots and flowers scattered to either side.² Although this was the first time that Margaret's portrait was encircled by love knots, it was far from the last. In particular, similar knots and their variations festooned the interior and exterior of the church in Brou that Margaret founded in 1506 [Fig. 12.2]. Nineteenth-century scholars writing about Brou believed that Margaret established the monastery primarily to serve as a monument to her enduring love for her handsome young husband; from this anachronistically modern point of view the love knots were thought to affirm the central importance of romantic and/or conjugal love in motivating Margaret's foundation.³ More recent studies argue that

1 Machiavelli N., *The Prince*, trans. L. Ricci (London: 1903) 66.

2 A similar medal made of gold and weighing 150 ducats, was presented to Margaret in honor of her wedding by the Syndics of Bourg August 5, 1502. See Tremayne E.E., *The First Governess of the Netherlands, Margaret of Austria* (New York: 1908) 40.

3 The term romantic love is here defined as 'love based on a personal-emotional attraction, with a strong erotic component [...]'; conjugal love 'develops over extended periods of time and is based essentially on feelings of appreciation, loyalty, and admiration, stemming from



FIGURE 12.1

*Medal commemorating Marriage of
Philibert II and Margaret of Austria, 1502.*

FIGURE 12.2 *Facade of St. Nicolas of Tolentino, Brou.*

PHOTO: AUTHOR.

Margaret was inspired by a diverse set of imperatives that were less personal and more political than previously thought.⁴ Ethan Matt Kavalier has studied the Renaissance Gothic ornament at Brou, identifying the origins of the far-ranging Continental styles used in the church, and analyzing how these decorative elements direct the viewer's experience and understanding of the building.⁵ Dagmar Eichberger's important studies have helped situate Margaret's architectural patronage within the complex political world in which she operated so successfully. In this chapter, I focus on the sculpted love knots in Margaret's church, which I believe were far more than an ornamental flourish or an attestation of love for her last husband; rather, these knots were intended to communicate symbolic, heraldic, and memorial meaning to a wide range of potential audiences. A more nuanced understanding of the love knots at Brou allows us to untangle elements of a building where cords of conjugal, filial, and sovereign love are inextricably intertwined.⁶

the sharing of common experiences'. See Lantz H.R., "Romantic Love in the Pre-Modern Period: A Sociological Commentary", *Journal of Social History* 15.3 (1982) 394. For an example of a nineteenth-century romantic explanation see Le Duc P., *L'église de Brou et la devise de Marguerite d'Autriche: poésies, précédées de documents inédits* (Bourg-en-Bresse: 1857) 43.

- 4 Carpino A., "Margaret of Austria's Funerary Complex at Brou, Conjugal Love, Political Ambition, or Personal Glory?", in Lawrence C. (ed.), *Women and Art in Early Modern Europe: Patrons, Collectors, and Connoisseurs* (University Park, PA: 1998) 37–52; Cahn W., *Masterpieces: Chapters on the History of an Idea* (Princeton: 1979) 43–64; Gelfand L.D., "Regency, Power, and Dynastic Visual Memory: Margaret of Austria as Patron and Propagandist", in Kittell E.E. – Suydam M.A. (eds.), *The Texture of Society: Medieval Women in the Southern Low Countries* (New York: 2004) 203–225; and eadem, "Margaret of Austria and the Encoding of Power in Patronage: The Funerary Foundation at Brou", in Levy, *Widowhood and Visual Culture*, 145–160. Dagmar Eichberger has contributed immensely to our understanding of Margaret's patronage and display; most relevant to the present study are *Leben mit Kunst: Wirchen durch Kunst: Sammelwesen und Hofkunst unter Margarete von Österreich, Regentin der Niederlande* (Turnhout: 2002); and Eichberger D. – Bleyerveld Y. (eds.), *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria* (Turnhout: 2005).
- 5 Kavalier E.M., "Margaret of Austria, Ornament, and the Court Style of Brou", in Campbell S.J. (ed.), *Artists at Court: Image-making and Identity, 1300–1550* (Boston: 2004) 124–137; Kavalier, E.M., *Renaissance Gothic* (New Haven: 2012); and Kavalier, "Renaissance Gothic: Pictures of Geometry and Narratives of Ornament", *Art History* 29. 1 (2006) 1–46.
- 6 The earliest reference I have located for the term *lacs d'amour*, or love knot, is in a verse from ca. 1190 by the troubadour Arnaut Daniel (active. 1180–1200); the earliest use of the motif by the counts of Savoy was ca. 1360.

Margaret of Austria's Marriages

Arranging Margaret's marriages provided her father, Maximilian I (1459–1519), with valuable opportunities to forge political alliances. At the age of three Margaret was betrothed to the French dauphin and she was raised in the French court at Amboise until Charles VIII (1470–1498) scandalously repudiated her for Anne of Brittany (1477–1514) in 1491. Her marriage a few years later to the sickly Don Juan of Castile (1478–1497), lasted just six months, ending with his death after which Margaret suffered a miscarriage. Margaret's union with Philibert II (called le Beau), the duke of Savoy, at the age of 22, was her second marriage and third betrothal; it was also the last time that she agreed to be married. Margaret and Philibert were close in age and they seem to have been well-suited to one another. The young duke's preference for hunting and sports over administering the duchy of Savoy gave Margaret an opportunity to try her hand at governing, and her intelligence, aptitude, and enthusiasm for it were immediately apparent.⁷ Unfortunately, the couple's happy union ended in 1504 when Philibert died from pleurisy that was believed to have been caused by consuming too much cold water after a vigorous hunt.

Contemporary reports relate that Margaret grieved deeply after Philibert's death; she is said to have cut off all of her hair, and she donned the widow's peak that she wore for the remainder of her life [Fig. 12.3].⁸ Complaining that she had been married three times and was the worse for it each time,⁹ she declared that she would never remarry and began planning the construction of a modest monastic funerary complex where Philibert and his mother, Margaret of Bourbon (1438–83), would be buried.¹⁰ About 25 years earlier, her mother-in-law had vowed to build a Benedictine monastery on the site, but she died before she could start the project. The task was left to Philibert, and, after his death, to Margaret to complete. Within months of being widowed, Margaret

7 Eichberger D., "Instrumentalising Art for Political Ends. Margaret of Austria, règent et gouvernante des pays bas de l'empereur", in Bousmar E. – Dumont J. – Marchandisse A. – Schnerb B. (eds.) *Femmes de pouvoir, femmes politiques durant des derniers siècles du Moyen Âge et au cours de la première Renaissance* (Brussels: 2012) 573.

8 Jean Lemaire describes Margaret's grief in *La Couronne Margaritique*, 1504–1505; as quoted in Poirer M.F., *Le monastère de Brou, Le chef-d'oeuvre d'une fille d'empereur* (Paris: 1994) 26.

9 '[...] que par trois fois ils ont contracté d'elle, don't elle s'en est mal trouvée'. Her declaration was apparently quite widely known and appears in the letters of Louis XII among others; see Boom G. de, *Marguerite d'Autriche et la Pré-Renaissance* (Paris: 1935) 61.

10 Attreed L., "Gender, Patronage, and Diplomacy in the Early Career of Margaret of Austria (1480–1530)", *Mediterranean Studies* 20.1 (2012) 3–27.



FIGURE 12.3

Jan Hey (called Master of Moulins), Margaret of Austria, ca. 1490, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

WORK IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.

had purchased lands and contracted with local builders to begin construction of a small Augustinian monastery dedicated to St. Nicolas of Tolentino outside the walls of Bourg-en-Bresse in Brou.¹¹

Most of Margaret's early biographers, from Margaret's court poet, Jean Lemaire de Belges (1473–1525) to nineteenth-century poets and authors, put a romantic spin on the tale of youthful love cut short by a tragic death.¹² Lemaire was the first to promote this idea when he described Margaret as a modern-day Artemisia and encouraged her to build a grand memorial to her husband, one that could rival the famous Mausoleum of Halicarnassus.¹³ While Margaret's actual emotional attachment to Philibert is impossible to determine, we have

11 MacDonalD D., "Acknowledging the 'Lady of the House': Memory, Authority, and Self-Representation in the Patronage of Margaret of Austria", Ph.D diss., McGill University, 2002, 41–42.

12 De Boom, *Marguerite d'Autriche* 61.

13 For an overview of the patronage of widows during the Early Modern period see, Levy A. "Widow's Peek: Looking at Ritual and Representation", in Levy A. (ed.), *Widowhood and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe*, (Aldershot: 2003) 1–15. For a discussion of Artemisia as a model for the architectural patronage of widows, see ffolliott S., "Catherine de'Medici as Artemisia: Figuring the Powerful Widow", in Ferguson M.W. – Quilligan M. – Vickers N.J. (eds.), *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern*

abundant evidence for the battle that ensued after his death when she set about securing the financial resources that had been promised as part of her dowry. Charles III (1486–1553), who succeeded Philibert as duke of Savoy, quickly discovered that the duchy's financial status was quite weak. When he attempted to reduce funds promised to Margaret in her dowry, she not only fought him for the income from her lands, she also announced her intention to govern them. Charles and the *Chambre des comptes* objected, correctly seeing this as a Habsburg power grab. Margaret sought Maximilian's help in resolving the dispute and the resulting Treaty of Strasbourg (August 1505) gave Margaret full sovereignty over Bresse, Faucigny, Vaudois, Villard, and Gourdans.¹⁴ Although Margaret's dowry was to be governed in Bourg-en-Bresse by the region's council, its members were required to follow Margaret's instructions. She must have had some concerns about Charles's willingness to abide by the treaty, because when she moved to Mechelen in 1507 she brought three of the most valuable of the Savoy family jewels with her to ensure that she would continue receiving this income.¹⁵

A Modest Monastic Foundation

A portion of the funds Margaret secured through the 1505 Treaty were dedicated to constructing the monastic foundation at Brou;¹⁶ Margaret also sent a delegation of courtiers and high-ranking ecclesiastics to Rome to obtain a papal indulgence from Julius II (1443–1513).¹⁷ An indulgence would encourage pilgrimage to Brou and the resulting offerings would support the resident Augustinian canons. In a torrential rainstorm in August 1506, Margaret laid the

Europe (Chicago: 1986) 227–241. For Margaret of Austria as an Early Modern Artemisia, see Cahn, *Masterpieces* 47.

14 Eichberger, "Instrumentalising Art" 575.

15 Margaret brought a golden cross with pearls and stones, a golden glove with representations of four rulers and the co-called *carboncle de Savoie*, a large garnet stone in a gold, enameled box; see *ibid.*

16 Margaret was to receive 12,000 écus d'or annually from her lands and an annual allocation of 4000 florins was to be spent on the construction of the monastery from her dowry; see Bruchet M., *Marquerite d'Autriche, Duchesse de Savoie* (Lille: 1927) 149–150.

17 The delegation included the chancellor of Savoy, several cardinals, and Jean Lemaire. They also asked to have the parish church for the city of Brou officially moved to the city of Bourg-en-Bresse. The papal bull of indulgence was issued 16 July, 1506; see Baux J., *Recherches historiques et archéologiques sur l'église de Brou* (Bourg-en-Bresse: 1844) 169–170.

cornerstone for the first cloister.¹⁸ Her eagerness to see the foundation completed never faltered, and her plans for it were greatly expanded a few years after she laid the cornerstone. Today Bourg-en-Bresse is a quiet village far from any major urban centers and it is not readily apparent why Margaret would dedicate so much time, energy, and money to building a monastery there. As noted above, Margaret of Bourbon had vowed to build a church in Brou, and Margaret was making good on an as-yet unfulfilled promise. Additionally, the town of Bourg was the capital of Bresse and an important Savoyard city. Bourg was located on a major route between France and Italy, and the Savoy court at Pont d'Ain regularly hosted diplomatic travelers from diverse European courts on their way to or from other destinations. Margaret also enjoyed sovereignty over Bresse and the foundation at Brou would have provided an opulent *aide-mémoire* of the dowager duchess of Savoy in a highly visible location.¹⁹ The city of Bourg, adjacent to her foundation, was an important international thoroughfare and in 1505, it was the administrative center of Margaret's life.²⁰

Margaret remained personally involved with the construction of the monastery until 1506 when her brother, Philip the Fair (1487–1506), died leaving his son, the future Charles V (1500–1558), and his three sisters without a competent guardian. Margaret left Brou in 1507, never to return, and moved to Mechelen where she established an important international court and raised her nieces and nephew. It was around the time of her move that Margaret wrote the motto she used for the remainder of her life: 'Fortune, Infortune, Fort Une'. This motto accommodates multiple interpretations and its polyvalence allowed her to use it even after significant changes in her life and status. The motto may be seen as a lament referring to the death of her mother, her husband, and her brother; but it can also be interpreted as a proclamation of the strength of her character. When read as a tribute to her fortitude, Margaret assumes a role not unlike that of a political candidate emphasizing how her life experiences have honed her temperament and strengthened her will, preparing her to be an effective, unmarried female leader.²¹ Recognizing her competence, Maximilian

18 Baux, *Récherches historiques* 192–93.

19 Eichberger, "Instrumentalising Art" 575; and Attreed, "Gender, Patronage, and Diplomacy" 15.

20 MacDonald, "Lady of the House" 39; and Bruchet, *Marguerite d'Autriche* 93, 328–335.

21 Laussac É.-L., *Fortune-infortune-fort-une: notice explicative du quintuple sens de la devise de Marguerite d'Autriche, duchesse de Savoie et de Bresse, régente des Pays-Bas* (Bourg: 1897); and Blattes-Vial F., "Le manuscrit de la *Couronne margaritique* de Jean Lemaire de Belges offert par Marguerite d'Autriche à Philippe le Beau en 1505. La rhétorique et l'image au service d'une princesse assimilée à la paix", *Le Moyen Age* 1 (2015) 93.

asked Margaret to serve as his representative in the Netherlands, and after a brief trial period, he officially named her Regent in 1509, a post she occupied, with one interruption, until her death in 1530.²²

What's Love Got to Do with It?

A great deal of Margaret's correspondence has survived making it possible to study the meaning of endearments and declarations of love found throughout these documents. For example, nearly every one of Maximilian's numerous letters to Margaret begins, 'very dear and very beloved daughter'. Such endearments between a father and daughter don't seem unusual until we consider that Margaret's relationship with Maximilian is perhaps more akin to that of a close business colleague who works in a distant office rather than that of a parent and child. Sent to France at the age of three, Margaret never lived in the same city as Maximilian and they were very rarely together in a shared physical space. The love that Maximilian and Margaret ardently and repeatedly proclaim for one another is a very different kind of love than our contemporary understanding of filial love. It could never have been easy to be the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor, and the kinds of challenges Margaret faced when negotiating with her father are vividly illustrated when we consider his immediate response to Philibert's death. Despite her unequivocal declaration that she wished to remain unmarried, just a month after Philibert's death, her father and brother were eagerly attempting to arrange a marriage between Margaret and the King of England, Henry VII (1457–1509).²³ An exchange of portraits was organized in 1505, with one of Margaret sent to London where it was displayed at the English court. Maximilian commissioned a portrait of Henry that is recorded in later inventories of Margaret's collection [Fig. 12.4].²⁴ Margaret used her well-known rhetorical skills, and in particular she exploited language richly embroidered with attestations of love in order to pacify her father and brother while simultaneously avoiding a third marriage to the English king.

22 Eichberger D., "Margareta of Austria: A Princess with Ambition and Political Insight", in Eichberger D. – Bleyerveld Y. (eds.) *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria* (Turnhout: 2005) 52.

23 Attreed, "Gender, Patronage, and Diplomacy" 11, n. 38.

24 Ibid. 11. Maximilian wrote to Henry on 20 July 1506, urging the king to send an ambassador to Mechelen to finalize marriage arrangements with Margaret. *Lettres inédites de Maximilien, duc d'Autriche, roi des Romains et empereur, sur les affaires des Pays-Bas*, ed. L.P. Gachard, (Brussels – Ghent – Leipzig: 1851) 115–116.



FIGURE 12.4 *Netherlandish Artist, Henry VII (1457–1509), 1505. National Portrait Gallery, London.*

From 1505 until his death in 1509, Margaret sustained a close epistolary relationship with Henry during which she nurtured his matrimonial aspirations without making any firm commitments. Their letters to one another include elaborate endearments and are punctuated with proclamations of love and affection; Margaret assured Henry that if she were ever to remarry she would have none other than him.²⁵ Thanks to her skillful correspondence, Margaret successfully placated both the English king and her father, and she even leveraged her relationship with Henry in international affairs, all without having to marry him.²⁶

Margaret often wrote about love, but she was also associated with love as the subject of poems and other written documents. Margaret's court poet, Jean Lemaire, composed a treatise extolling his patron's many exemplary qualities as she was leaving Brou to start a new life in Mechelen; in it he described her as 'burning with love for public affairs', saying she 'enlightened and radiated the heat of true love and holy will to the hearts of all good subjects [...]'.²⁷ Lemaire makes frequent references to love, both in correspondence with Margaret and when writing about her. In a letter of 1512 he wrote, 'Where I serve my heart is totally given and reason approves', in other letters he vowed his total love to her. The love that Lemaire professes is intended to bind the lover to the beloved with an expectation of total respect and affection in return.²⁸ As a member of the court, Lemaire's position was entirely dependent on his ability to please his patron, and in his letters and poems he explores rhetorical devices that highlight his abilities while conveying his complete subservience to Margaret.²⁹ Peter Eubanks has suggested that in several poems, including *L'Amant Vert*, Lemaire deliberately elided his authorial voice with that of Margaret, who was

25 Attreed, "Gender, Patronage, and Diplomacy" 20–21.

26 A letter survives in which Margaret dictates a message for Henry VII and instructs the ambassador who will deliver it to convey her love and affection for the king in some detail; see *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche, gouvernante des Pays-Bas, avec ses amis sur les affaires des pays-bas de 1506–1528*, ed. L.P.C. van den Bergh, 4 vols. (Leiden: 1847) I 41–49.

27 Eichberger, "Margareta of Austria" 52.

28 Fontaine M.M., "Olivier de La Marche and Jean Lemaire de Belges, the Author and his Female Patron", in Eichberger D. – Bleyerveld Y. (eds.) *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria* (Turnhout: 2005) 228. The letters are published in *Oeuvres de Jean Lemaire de Belges*, ed. J. Stecher, 4 vols. (Leuven: 1882–1891) IV 376–377, 385–389, 392–413, and 423–426; see also the new critical edition by Schoysman A. (ed.), *Jean Lemaire de Belges, Lettres missives et épîtres dédicatoires* (Brussels: 2012).

29 Eubanks P., "Jean Lemaire de Belges's Rheorical Masks in *L'Amant Vert* and 'Les Regretz de la Dame Infortunée'", *Romance Quarterly* 59.3 (2012) 166–167.

an accomplished poet in her own right.³⁰ By fusing their literary identities, Lemaire flatters his patron and elevates his own status while cultivating an emotional connectedness between servant and master like that recommended by Balthazar Castiglione.³¹ Additionally, Lemaire's literary submersion into his patron's emotional life mirrors the devotional practices promoted by Thomas à Kempis in his *Imitatio Christi*.³² Margaret's impressive library in Mechelen included three copies of Kempis's bestseller in which the devotee is exhorted to imitate Christ, becoming God's servant with the ultimate goal of attaining union with Christ in 'endless love'.³³ Lemaire's use of the rhetorical language of love is connected to socio-political and devotional discourses of the time, and he could be fairly certain that his rhetorical references would be understood and appreciated by his erudite patron and contemporary readers.

The love that Jean Lemaire, Maximilian, and Henry VII avowed for Margaret probably shared common rhetorical origins and functions. Historians of medieval and Early-Modern law have shown that the role of mutual consent in contractual relations, whether private or public, was widely understood as concomitant with passionate love. Political relationships as impersonal as sovereign and subject were widely considered to mirror a 'loving and compassionate marriage [...]'.³⁴ Within this political framework, declarations of love between noble spouses in arranged marriages—or prospective spouses like Henry VII—should be understood as assurances of contractual faithfulness. For example, as a toddler Margaret had no say in the marriage arrangements Maximilian made to advance Habsburg imperial aims. However, as a young widow, Margaret was smart, experienced, and strong-willed enough to evade an undesirable marriage. While they were certainly appropriate elements in correspondence between a father and daughter, Maximilian's epistolary endearments also tap into political discourses and they were intended to bend Margaret to his will, encouraging her compliance with obligations associated with being an Emperor's daughter.³⁵ As his political proxy in the Netherlands,

30 Ibid. 173–175.

31 Castiglione B., *The Book of the Courtier (Il Courtigiano)*, 1528, trans. C.S. Singleton (New York: 1959); ways in which Lemaire modeled himself on Castiglione's courtier are also discussed by Fontaine in "Olivier de la Marche and Jean Lemaire de Belges" 228.

32 Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, 1472, ed. – trans. W.C. Creasy (Macon, GA: 1989).

33 Fontaine, "Olivier de la Marche and Jean Lemaire de Belges" 236.

34 Attreed, "Gender, Patronage, and Diplomacy" 21, n. 64; and McShane A., "Subjects and Objects: Material Expressions of Love and Loyalty in Seventeenth-Century England", *Journal of British Studies* 48 (2009) 871–886, esp. 873–874.

35 When endearments didn't work, Maximilian used emotional blackmail and other less charming means of trying to get Margaret to do what he wanted see Attreed, "Gender, Patronage, and Diplomacy" 11.

Margaret used the rhetorical language of love in political and filial frameworks to assure Maximilian that he could trust her to represent his interests. Politicians, diplomats, courtiers, spouses, as well as noble parents and children sent one another fervent attestations of love; in this way they pulled strings of obligation more tightly into knots of obeisance, even while rooting such obeisance in affective bonds of love.

Expanding Plans for the Monastic Foundation at Brou

Margaret's plans for the funerary complex were greatly expanded in 1509 when she announced her intention to be buried at Brou alongside Philibert. Margaret's decision seems to have been the result of two significant events that occurred that year. First, in 1509 Maximilian officially appointed Margaret regent of the Netherlands. Along with her new title, Margaret was given greater responsibility and she received the imperial financial signet which meant that she could now work directly with Maximilian's fiscal officers. Second, Henry VII died in 1509 removing one of the major obstacles standing between Margaret and the perpetual widowhood she desired. In revising her plans for the monastery at Brou, the scale of the entire complex was enlarged in order to serve as an appropriately magnificent resting place for the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor.

Margaret started the project at Brou with Jean Lemaire and a team of French artists who had worked at the French court; they were asked to design a modestly-scaled monastery and church to house a tomb for Philibert and for his mother, Margaret of Bourbon.³⁶ For a variety of reasons, the French team was replaced in 1512 by the Flemish master mason, Louis van Boghem (1470–1540), who traveled to Mechelen annually to consult with Margaret about the plans.³⁷ A Flemish *chantier* was established on the site and Conrad Meit (ca. 1470–ca. 1550) began carving sculptures for all three of the tombs in 1526. Margaret closely monitored the progress of the construction and she planned to live in

36 Baux, *Récherches historiques* 79–80; and Bruchet, *Marguerite d'Autriche* 149. See Vitry P., *Michel Colombe et la sculpture française de son temps* (Paris: 1901) 365–373, 490–492, for documents related to Colombe's work at Brou. Also see Lemoine J.-G., "Autour du tombeau de Philibert le Beau à Brou. Une description du projet Perréal-Colombe par Jean Lemaire de Belges", *Révue Belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art* 10 (1941) 35–52.

37 Rousselet P., *Histoire et description de l'Église de Brou, élevée à Bourg-en-Bresse sous les ordres de Marguerite d'Autriche, entre les années 1511 et 1536* (Bourg-en-Bresse: 1850) 10; also see Tolley T., "States of Independence: Women Regents as Patrons of the Visual Arts in Renaissance France", *Renaissance Studies* 10.2 (1996) 237–258, esp. 249.

private quarters in the monastery after retiring as regent. Unfortunately, she died of complications from a prosaic household accident in 1530, two years before the monastery was completed and consecrated. As requested in her will, Margaret's body was brought to Brou in 1532 and interred in the crypt beneath her magnificent tomb.³⁸

Knots, Mottos, and Other Heraldic Devices

Like many other privately-funded churches, heraldry dominates Brou's iconographic program and nearly every surface—from floors to ceilings, in stained glass, tapestry, and stone revetment—broadcasts information about the donor's noble ancestry.³⁹ The extensive heraldic display at Brou includes a profusion of love knots, yet few scholars have done more than note their presence. Like other heraldic signs, these love knots serve more than one symbolic function: in addition to denoting Margaret and Philibert's enduring union, love knots are one of the oldest and most important heraldic devices of the house of Savoy.⁴⁰ Christian de Mérindol tallied a total of 20 Savoy knots and 27 knot-entwined P&M initials inside the church [Fig. 12.5a–b].⁴¹ This extensive display of love knots is correlated with Margaret's strategic use of the sixteenth-century lexicon that bound together love and obligation. As we have seen, Margaret skillfully exploited her fluency with multivalent meaning to

38 Margaret stepped on a piece of broken glass that became infected and eventually gangrenous, she died before her foot could be amputated; see Tremayne, *The First Governess of the Netherlands* 278. For Margaret's will see Baux J., *Histoire de l'Église de Brou* (Lyon: 1862) 345–354.

39 The most detailed analysis of the monastery is Hörsch M., *Architektur unter Margarethe von Österreich, Regentin der Niederlande (1507–1530)* (Brussels: 1994). Studies centering on the heraldry include: de Mérindol C. de, "Le décor emblématique et les vitraux armories du couvent Saint-Nicolas-de-Tolentin à Brou", *Revue française d'héraldique et de sigillographie* 64 (1994) 149–180; and idem, "Le Programme iconographique du couvent de Brou: Réflexions sur les églises à destination funéraire", in Guillaume J., (ed.) *Demeures d'éternité: églises et chapelles funéraires aux XV^e et XVI^e siècles* (Paris: 2005) 147–156.

40 The knots first became part of Savoy heraldry in the middle of the fourteenth century. Chiffolleau J., "L'emblématique entre le jeu et l'obsession", in Andenmatten B. – Bagliani A.P. – Vadon A. (eds.) *Héraldique et emblématique de la Maison de Savoie (XI^e–XVI^e s.)* (Lausanne: 1994) 207–222.

41 Mérindol, "Le décor emblématique" 157–158.



FIGURE 12.5A *Love knots and entwined initials from Brou.*
PHOTO: AUTHOR.

negotiate a treacherous political landscape and become a successful female ruler. Her use of symbolic language at Brou is part of her campaign to forge and promote an enduring public identity that would buttress her regency in her own time and extend into the distant future.⁴²

Today, visitors to the church of St. Nicolas of Tolentino in Brou enter through the west façade and pass beneath kneeling portraits of Margaret and Philibert

42 On the four types of frameworks, including the symbolic frame, see Bolman L.G. – Deal T.E., *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership* (San Francisco: 2013) 243–302. Margaret would not have thought in terms of the specific frameworks discussed



FIGURE 12.5B *Love knots and entwined initials from Brou.*
 PHOTO: AUTHOR.

with their patron saints directing their prayers toward a sculpted figure of the Ecce Homo [Fig. 12.6]. It is here that we first see the carved ropes that weave the Ps and Ms of Philibert and Margaret's initials together; these sculpted, undercut letters are joined by a love knot and project convexly from the voussoirs and the lintel. At the base of the corbel beneath Philibert's sculpted portrait is another love knot, or Savoy knot. These knots began as the personal emblem of Count Amadeus VI (1334–1383) and were then incorporated into heraldry for the Savoyard Order of the Collar of the Annunciation, founded around 1364.⁴³ Importantly, the Savoy knot is an emblem of faith in both the

by Bolman and Deal; my point is just that she was exceptionally skilled at using symbols to support her role as a leader and that this method is still promoted in current literature on successful leadership.

- 43 Pastoureau M., "L'emblématique princière à la fin du Moyen Age. Essai de lexicque et de typologie", *Héraldique et emblématique de la Maison de Savoie (XI^e–XVI^e s.)*, in Andenmatten B. – Bagliani A.P. – Vadon A. (eds.), *Héraldique et emblématique de la Maison de Savoie (XI^e–XVI^e s.)* (Lausanne: 1994) 11–44.



FIGURE 12.6
*Detail of Façade of St. Nicolas of
 Tolentino showing Philibert.*
 PHOTO: AUTHOR.

knightly Order and the house of Savoy, and it symbolizes the union of faith and love.⁴⁴

The letters *FERT*—a Savoyard motto with a somewhat elusive meaning—are also located beneath Philibert’s sculpted portrait, where it is split by a shield on which his coat-of-arms would have been painted. *FERT* may be the acronym of a Latin phrase referring to Count Amadeus V (ca. 1250–1323), who conquered Rhodes in 1315; it may also be an acronym for the Latin phrase: ‘We are held by Pact and Religion.’⁴⁵ It has also been suggested that *FERT* is the third-person singular, past tense of the Latin verb *ferre* meaning ‘he bore’ or ‘carried’, and that it refers to the knightly members who wear or ‘carry’ the Collar of the Annunciation.⁴⁶ Within Savoyard heraldic traditions, the knot and *FERT* often appear together and both are deliberately multivalent: they may represent the person of the duke of Savoy, the dynastic house of Savoy, and/or the noble members of the Order of the Collar.

44 Pastoureaux, “L’emblématique princière” 36.

45 The phrase represented by the acronym has been identified as: *Fortitudo Elius Rhodum Tenuit* and *Foedere Et Religione Tenemur*.

46 Pastoureaux, “L’emblématique princière” 30–31.



FIGURE 12.7
*Detail of Façade of St. Nicolas of
 Tolentino showing Margaret.*
 PHOTO: AUTHOR.

Beneath her portrait on the façade, Margaret's empty shield is flanked by damaged fire-steels (heraldic devices of the Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece) shaped like the capital letter B [Fig. 12.7]; a well-preserved example appears on the voussoir above Philibert where the fire-steel is bound by a cord to the X-shaped cross of St. Andrew, the patron saint of Burgundy. Reinforcing her family connections as a direct descendant of the Valois dukes of Burgundy was politically imperative for Margaret. Burgundy had been controlled by the French since 1477, when the duchy was inherited by Margaret's mother, Mary of Burgundy. The French king, citing Salic laws, claimed that Burgundy was a French *appanage* and that, without a male heir it rightfully belonged to the French. Margaret's correspondence with Maximilian frequently refers to the loss of Burgundy, which still stung. Command of the Order of the Golden Fleece had passed to Maximilian, and Burgundian iconography, including B-shaped fire-steels and the X-shaped cross of Andrew entwined with ropes, appears frequently in the church. As I have noted elsewhere, the Chartreuse du Champmol influenced several important elements of Brou's design.⁴⁷ Founded by Philip the Bold near Dijon in 1383, the monastery included a large church

47 Gelfand, "Encoding of Power" 156–157.

that served as a mausoleum for the Valois dukes. Margaret visited Champmol in 1501 as she travelled south to marry Philibert, and while there she may have noticed that she and her future husband had the same initials as Philip the Bold and his wife, Margaret of Flanders. Perhaps the animated Ms and Ps that seem to bounce along the base of Claus Sluter's *Virgin and Child* on the portal trumeau inspired the lyrically intertwined initials at Brou [Fig. 12.8]. Additional symbolic devices found on the façade at Brou include the daisy (or Marguerite) with what may be a writing quill or a martyr's palm: the quill could allude to Margaret's well-known accomplishments as an author, while a palm would be linked to the monastery's overall iconographic focus on the Passion.⁴⁸

The large windows at the end of the chevet in Brou are filled with extensive genealogical cycles detailing Philibert and Margaret's ancestry in glazed heraldic shields [Fig. 12.9]. Philibert's Savoyard ancestry fills the two lancets to the viewer's left of the central window, with Margaret's to our right. Margaret's ancestry, like the heraldry throughout the church, corresponds closely with her official titles: Archduchess of Austria and Burgundy, dowager Duchess of Savoy, and Countess of Burgundy. Records reveal that now-missing, painted heraldic shields were originally displayed in the church along with a balustrade decorated with Savoy heraldry that encircled Philibert's tomb.⁴⁹ Between 1526 and 1530, Margaret commissioned a series of opulent tapestries for the monastery, four of which remained in the sacristy until the Nineteenth century. Two are now housed in Budapest including the one illustrated here [Fig. 12.10], that shows Margaret's arms within the heart-shaped space between two twisting branches, surrounded by the arms of Charles the Bold and Maximilian on the left and Isabelle of Bourbon and Mary of Burgundy on the right.⁵⁰ The tapestry's twisting tree branches echoed similar vegetal ornamentation found throughout the church, and the heart-shape they form may be another reference to familial love. Margaret had compelling reasons to pack this church with a profusion of heraldry. While local visitors may have known who the patron was, they may not have been particularly interested in her ancestry, yet this elaborate heraldic display would have found an appreciative and knowledgeable audience in the many international diplomats who travelled through Brou. Additionally, and importantly, as a childless widow, Margaret was literally

48 Mérimond argues that it is a palm; see "Le décor emblématique" 155.

49 *Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire de Marguerite d'Autriche, duchesse de Savoie, régente de la Pays-Bas*, ed. E. de Quinsonas, 3 vols. (Paris: 1860) 1 380–382; and Bruchet, *Marguerite d'Autriche* 244–245.

50 Mérimond, "Le décor emblématique" 173–175.



FIGURE 12.8 *Claus Sluter, Detail from portal sculpture, Chartreuse de Champmol, Dijon.*

PHOTO: AUTHOR.



FIGURE 12.9 *View of windows in Choir, St. Nicolas of Tolentino, Brou.*
PHOTO: AUTHOR.

the end of the line: it was imperative for her to tie her own single, dangling line into a large, densely-woven knot of dynastic security.

The Tombs

One of the church's primary functions was to house the three tombs that still dominate the choir. Margaret of Bourbon's tomb is set into the choir's south wall and several elements, particularly the mourners on the base, point to stylistic inspiration from fourteenth- and fifteenth-century tomb designs. Philibert's freestanding tomb, with its remarkable sculpted gisants, angels,



FIGURE 12.10 *Henri van Lacke, Tapestry with Arms of Margaret of Austria, 1528, Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest.*

and female virtues, combines Italianate and Renaissance Gothic forms.⁵¹ The hands of Philibert's gisant on top of the tomb are clasped in prayer and directed across his chest toward his mother, while his head turns toward Margaret's tomb in a gesture that seems to reciprocate his widow's devotion.

Unlike many of her female contemporaries, Margaret does not share a tomb with her husband, and hers is the most impressive tomb in the church [Fig. 12.11]. Margaret's tomb is anchored to the last pier in the choir and it seems to extend organically from her private, two-story oratory behind it. The tomb's massive, carved canopy conveys a sense of motion, as if we are witnessing the relics of a saint moving through the choir in an ongoing and eternal

51 Gelfand L.D., "Virtues or Sibyls?: The Identity of the Sculpted Female Figures on the Tomb of Philibert le Beau in Brou", *Iconographica: Journal of Medieval and Modern Iconography* 7 (2008) 79–89.

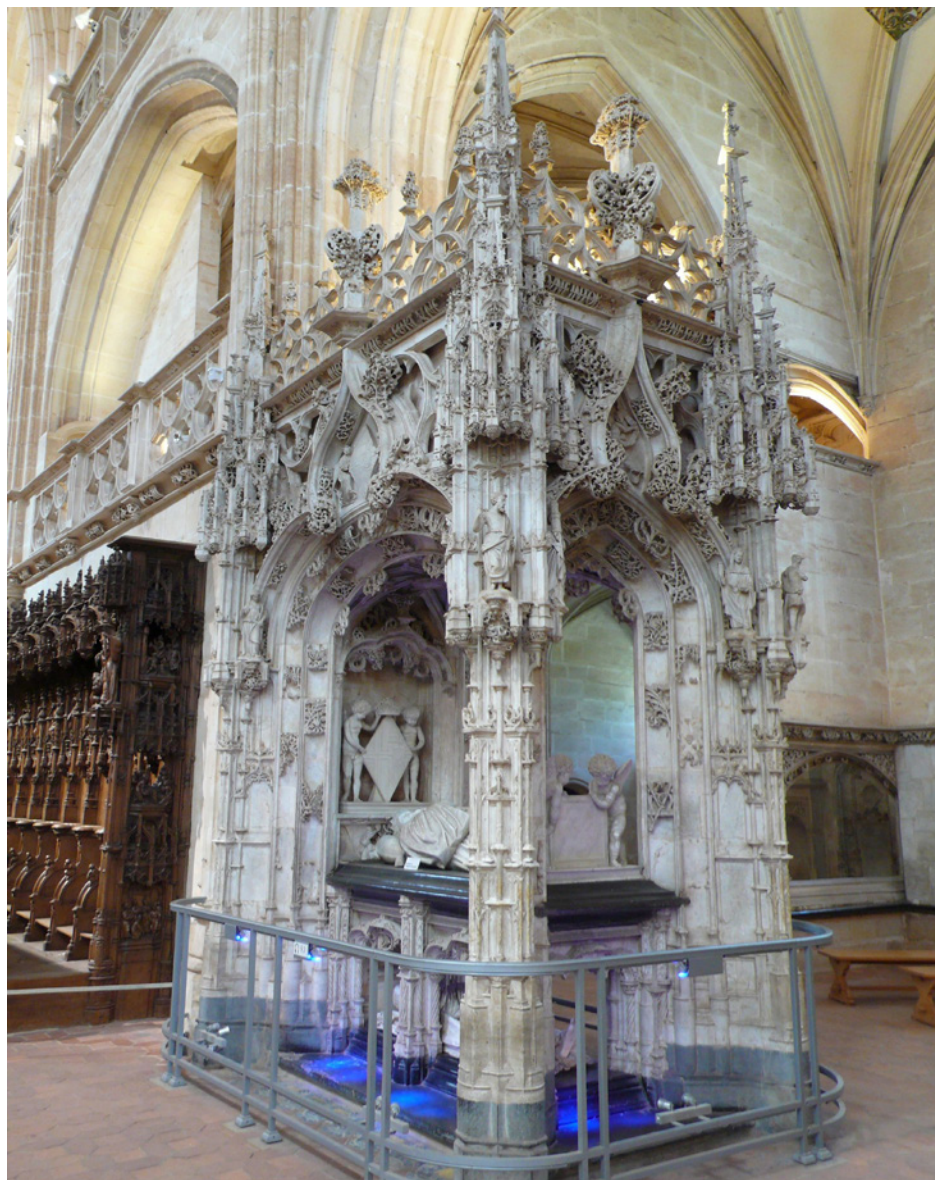


FIGURE 12.11 *Conrad Meit, Tomb of Margaret of Austria, St. Nicolas of Tolentino, Bruges.*
PHOTO: AUTHOR.

procession. Margaret's tomb incorporates and encapsulates all of the heraldry, mottos, and armorials displayed throughout the building: the carving on the tomb is so profuse that it has a frothy appearance resembling sea foam. The overwhelming size and magnificence of the tomb is brought back to human scale with Conrad Meit's life-size gisants depicting Margaret as a regal queen on the upper level of her tomb, and with her hair unbound and loosely draped across her shoulders as she reposes peacefully in death below. In a touching gesture that brings Margaret's death into sharp relief, Meit carved a wound on the base of the lower gisant's bare left foot, a reminder of the cause of Margaret's death.

The lovely lower gisant shows Margaret with her eyes closed and her head gently inclined toward Philibert's tomb, a subtle indication of her attachment to him; this is the only overt reference in the church to the conjugal love that Margaret felt for Philibert. In looking around the chevet, Margaret's rationale for constructing the church at Brou becomes clear: it is covered with heraldic devices, including knots and knotted symbols, that attest to her past, present, and future importance for Savoy, Austria, and Burgundy. Nearly every surface features some sort of knot or tie, many with decorative flourishes that draw the viewer's eye and produce an almost overwhelming impression of abundance. The floor of the chevet was originally covered with yellow and blue faïence tiles arranged in a pattern with square tiles surrounded by hexagonal ones.⁵² The central square tiles were filled with a range of subjects including bust-length profiles of emperors, kings, queens, and a wide variety of other portrait types from antiquity to the present, as well as musical instruments, trophies, and emblems. The hexagonal tiles that connect the central squares and make the overall pattern are painted with leafy tendrils and vines so that in its original state the tiled floor mirrored and amplified the visual abundance and vibrancy of the rest of the chevet. Despite the dominating presence of the tombs, and the mortuary function of the church, when it was first completed this vivid, brightly-colored environment would practically have pulsed with dynamic energy.

Visitors to Brou are presented with numerous catalogs of the donor's genealogy so that they will recognize who Margaret of Austria was, what she did, and hopefully take away with them an enduring memory of why she mattered. Rather than emphasizing the fact that the childless regent was the last of a line of Valois dukes that began with Philip the Bold and ruled for nearly two

52 Nivière M-D., "Le pavement de faïence de l'église de Brou: État de la question," in Crépin-Leblond T. – Rosen J. (eds.), *Images du pouvoir. Pavements de faïence en France du XIII^e au XVII^e siècle* (Paris – Brou: 2000) 119–133.

centuries, the vegetal and lacy ornament that dominates the chevet at Brou twists and twirls, bursting with a fecund vitality that assures viewers that the peaceful prosperity of Margaret's reign will continue long into the future. Hers was a reign that was marked by love: love for the people over whom she governed; love for her family, including her father, brother, and the nephew and nieces she raised. Margaret dressed as a widow for over half her life, projecting the enduring conjugal love she felt for her husband and protecting herself from having to remarry. The abundance of Margaret's love extended to those she employed, as was the case with Jean Lemaire. And the expected response from those fortunate enough to live within the enveloping arc of Margaret's love was that they would love her in return.

Thus, to paraphrase Tina Turner, what's love got to do with Brou?⁵³ For Margaret and her contemporaries, love and sovereign leadership were inseparably interwoven. When examined within this framework, Margaret of Austria's church at Brou is a temple of love, but one that performs as a physical embodiment of Margaret's loving sovereign relationship with Savoy. The church at Brou provides visitors with an elaborate rhetorical display in which Margaret embodies a rich variety of types of enduring love: conjugal love for Philibert; filial love in fulfilling the vow of a mother-in-law she never met, and perhaps most significantly, the love of a sovereign for her subjects. For over two decades every portrait made of Margaret showed her in a somber widow's peak, but in her portraits at Brou, she is represented as the resplendent daughter and aunt of Holy Roman emperors, an archduchess, a countess, and a duchess. In death, no longer a widow, Margaret embodies the ideal sovereign, one who governs with love and who expects and deserves to be loved by her subjects in return. Margaret's church of St. Nicolas of Tolentino truly is a temple of love, and it honors a kind of love that seamlessly and inextricably interlaces politics and family.

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53 Tina Turner's hit song, *What's Love Got to Do With It*, was included on her Grammy-winning album, *Private Dancer*, released in 1984 on Capitol Records.

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Rubens, Rembrandt, and the Spousal Model/Muse

H. Perry Chapman

The idea that art originates in love—expressed in the topos *liefde baart kunst*, love begets art—was central to early modern Netherlandish art theory. In the triad of art's motivations, love ranked above honour and profit; it was the artist's driving force and highest goal.¹ Conceptualized as a lofty love of God, or love of art, it encompassed both erotic love and conjugal love. Love's power to inspire and impassion was encapsulated, conceptually and visually, in the relation between artist and model. Tales in which the artist's model is also his (or her) lover and muse originated in antiquity; were retold by the early modern artists' biographers; and had pictorial currency in the seventeenth century. The painter and theorist Joachim von Sandrart illustrated the story of the Greek sculptor Butades's daughter, who, when her lover was going abroad, drew on a wall the outline of the shadow of his face that was cast by a lamp.² Von Sandrart took from this that 'love was the inventor of this beautiful science' of drawing.³

Pliny's account of Apelles painting Campaspe is an origin story about the power of erotic love to impassion the painter and inspire the creation of the beautiful, seductive female nude. Alexander the Great engaged Apelles to paint Campaspe, the most beloved of all his concubines, 'undraped', and when the painter fell in love with his model, Alexander made him a present of her.⁴

1 Woodall J., "Love Is in the Air: *Amor* as Motivation and Message in Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Painting", *Art History* 19 (1996) 208–64; idem, "Wtewael's *Perseus and Andromeda*: Looking for Love in Early Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting", in Arscott C. – Scott K. (eds.), *Manifestations of Venus: Art and Sexuality* (Manchester: 2000) 39–68; and Jongh E. de, *Portretten van echt en trouw: Huwelijk en gezin in de Nederlandse kunst van de zeventiende eeuw* [exh. cat., Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem] (Zwolle: 1986) 57–59, 270–278. Sluijter E.J., *Seductress of Sight: Studies in Dutch Art of the Golden Age*, Studies in Netherlandish Art and Cultural History 2 (Zwolle: 2000) 108–159, discusses the inspirational powers of Venus, love, and female beauty.

2 Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham (London: 1968) 35.43.151, 373.

3 Sandrart Joachim von, *Teutsche Academie der Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste* (Nuremberg: 1675) Kirchner T. – Nova A. – Blüm C. – Schreurs A. – Wübbena T. (eds.), 2008–2012, II, Vorrede 3, http://ta.sandrart.net/en/text/201_06/19/16: 'Etliche machen die Liebe zur ersten Erfinderin dieser schönen Wissenschaft'.

4 Pliny, *Natural History*, 35.36, 85–87.

This anecdote is often taken as a courtly tale about the mutually beneficial relation between an artist and a ruler who demonstrated his self-command by sacrificing his passions in favour of the artist. And, indeed, Joos van Winghe painted his large *Apelles Paints Campaspe* for Emperor Rudolph II [Fig. 13.1]. Above all, the story enshrined the female nude, represented from life and transformed into an ideal beauty, as the most perfect subject of art. In retelling it, Karel van Mander emphasized the erotic power of the nude model: 'Because Apelles had more knowledge than Alexander about the beauty of the perfect human body and the appearance of a beautiful woman, so too he was more powerfully confronted with and overcome by unchaste love due to the constant observation of her when he was painting'.⁵ Of Van Winghe's work, he wrote, 'Apelles paints the delightfully beautiful Campaspe, as his love for her ignites'.⁶ Van Winghe has portrayed himself in the guise of Apelles, his heart pierced by Cupid's arrow.⁷ The shell identifies Campaspe with Venus, following Pliny's suggestion that she was the model for Apelles's *Venus Anadyomene* (rising from the sea). Hence, Venus, goddess of love, becomes the artist's model and muse. At just this same time Hendrick Goltzius conflated Venus with Pictura, the personification of painting.⁸

Thirty years later, when Willem van Haecht staged the story of Apelles and Campaspe in a grand, fictional Antwerp gallery, he would have little to do with nudity inflaming passion [Fig. 13.2]. Instead, in a kind of domestication of the artist's model, he cast Campaspe as a muse, in the turban of a sibyl and an excess of drapery, and with one breast exposed, signifying virtuous love. A nearby drawing of the Judgement of Paris identifies her with Venus. The juxtaposition of the modest Campaspe with this gallery's many sculpted and painted nudes, most notably Correggio's carnal *Venus and Cupid with a Satyr*, hanging at upper right, encapsulates the complexities surrounding the depiction of nudity in Counter-Reformation Antwerp.⁹ Following the Council of Trent's prohibitions

5 Sluijter E.J., *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* (Amsterdam: 2006) 309, 317, citing Mander Karel van, *Schilder-Boeck* (Haarlem, Paschier van Wesbusch: 1604), fol. 79 recto: 'maer alsoo Appelles de volmaecte schoonheyt eens Menschen lichaems en gedaente eender schoonder Vrouwen beter kende als Alexander, soo werdt hy met oncuyscher liefden te crachtelijcker bestreden en verwonnen, in haer stadich aen te sien alsoo hy met het schilderen doende was'.

6 Mander, *Schilder-Boeck*, fol. 264 verso: 'en van de Liefde gheprickelt wort'.

7 For confirmation that Apelles is a likeness of Van Winghe, compare his portrait in Hondius Hendrick, *Pictorum aliquot celebrium, praecipue Germaniae Inferioris, effigies* (The Hague, Henricus Hondius: 1610) 89.

8 For Hendrick Goltzius, *Venus/Pictura* (Germany, private collection), see Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight*, Fig. 109.

9 Correggio's *Venus and Cupid with a Satyr* is now in the Louvre, Paris.



FIGURE 13.1 *Joos van Winghe, Apelles Paints Campaspe (ca. 1600). Oil on canvas, 221 × 209 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.*

PHOTO: ERICH LESSING / ART RESOURCE, NY.

against lascivious images, Church officials routinely censured nudity in religious art, and the pressure to conform in other kinds of art was considerable. The aim was to protect the ignorant who, mistaking depicted nudity for the real thing, were inspired to lust.¹⁰

10 Clippel K. de, "Altering, Hiding and Resisting: The Rubensian Nude in the Face of Censorship", in Clippel K. de – Cauteren K. van – Stighelen K. van der (eds.), *The Nude and the Norm in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Turnhout: 2011) 201–220; Laet V. de,



FIGURE 13.2 Willem van Haecht, *Apelles Painting Campaspe* (ca. 1630). Oil on panel, 104.9 × 148.7 cm. The Hague, Mauritshuis.
PHOTO: SCALA / ART RESOURCE, NY.

At the same time, nudity was overlooked, even sanctioned, for sophisticated *liefhebbers*, who could properly appreciate the aesthetic significance and classical heritage of the beautiful nude. Further, by the seventeenth century in the Netherlands, nudity and eros were licensed by marriage; virtuous conjugal love had replaced erotic love as a motivation for art; and the artist's procreativity within the family had become a metaphor for his artistic creativity.¹¹ In Van Haecht's *Picture Gallery of Cornelis van der Geest*, Jan van Eyck's famous, long-lost *Woman Bathing*, a rare early Netherlandish nude, hangs, strategically,

"*Een Naeckt Kindt, een Naeckt Vrouwken ende Andere Figueren: An Analysis of Nude Representations in the Brussels Domestic Setting*", in Clippel K. de – Caeteren K. van – Stighelen K. van der (eds.), *The Nude and the Norm in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Turnhout: 2011) 117–128.

11 Woodall J., *Anthonis Mor. Art and Authority* (Zwolle: 2007) 444–454; Griffey E., "Pro-Creativity: Art, Love and Conjugal Virtue in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Artists' Self-Portraits", *Dutch Crossing* 28 (2004) 27–66.

above a copy of Praxiteles's *Venus Pudica*.¹² Further indication of the domestication of the artist's model is that at least one Antwerp collector thought that Jan van Eyck had used his wife as his model. In the margin of his copy of Van Mander's *Schilder-boeck*, Peeter Stevens wrote: "The most famous bath, in which Van Eyck has painted the portrait of his wife nude and clothed."¹³

This essay explores what happened to the notion that the artist's model is his lover and muse when the model was also his wife—and this in the urban merchant societies of seventeenth-century Antwerp and Amsterdam, where nudity was contentious among certain groups and persuasions. Specifically it examines the role of the spouse as model, and as nude model, in the art of Rubens and Rembrandt, who had set himself the challenge of rivaling Rubens. Each painter had two marriages, which corresponded with different phases of their careers. More accurately, Rubens married twice, first to Isabella Brant and then to Helena Fourment. Strictly speaking, Rembrandt was married once, to Saskia van Uylenburgh; Hendrickje Stoffels was his common-law wife. With their second wives, we encounter the issue of the spouse as nude model.

Seventeenth-century artists, and Rubens and Rembrandt specifically, readily used unclothed male models.¹⁴ But the extent to which they employed nude female models, who in practice tended to be prostitutes, is a current topic of debate. As unlikely as it may seem, given that each, in his own way, achieved a radically new lifelikeness in representing the female body, recent critics have maintained that Rubens drew from female nude models rarely, or not at all, and that Rembrandt did so only after about 1650.¹⁵ Neither one of

12 Willem van Haecht, *Picture Gallery of Cornelis van der Geest*, 1628, Antwerp, Rubenshuis.

13 Thøfner M., "Helena Fourment's *Het Pelsken*", *Art History* 27 (2004) 10, citing Briels J.G.C.A., "*Amator pictoriae artis: de Antwerpsche kunstverzamelaar Peeter Stevens (1590–1668) en zijn constkamer*", *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen* (1980) 173.

14 Kettering A.M., "Rembrandt and the Male Nude" in Boschloo A.W.A. et al. (eds.), *Aemulatio. Imitation, Emulation and Invention in Netherlandish Art from 1500 to 1800. Essays in Honour of Eric Jan Sluiter* (Zwolle: 2011) 248–262.

15 Logan A.-M. – Plomp M.C., *Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640): The Drawings* [exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York] (New Haven – London: 2005) 147–148, 294–295; Sluiter E.J., "'Horrible nature, incomparable art': Rembrandt and the Depiction of the Female Nude", in Lloyd Williams J., *Rembrandt's Women* [exh. cat., National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh; Royal Academy of Arts, London] (Munich: 2001) 37–45; Sluiter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* 267–327; Kok E., "The Female Nude from Life: On Studio Practice and Beholder Fantasy", in Clippel K. de – Cauteren K. van – Stighelen K. van der (eds.), *The Nude and the Norm in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Turnhout: 2011) 35–50; Noorman J. – Witt D. de, *Rembrandt's Naked Truth: Drawing Nude Models in the Golden Age* [exh. cat., Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam] (Zwolle: 2016) 11–22.

them would have represented his wife in the nude, critics argue, largely on the basis of seventeenth-century moral strictures.¹⁶ This essay reexamines the question of the wife as model from the perspective of love, beauty, and truth. It explores whether love—of the sort that gives birth to art—and the heritage of Apelles trumped early modern norms of morality and justified depicted nudity. For Rubens, who painted his young second wife nude either for himself, in *Het Pelsken*, or in a court context, as in *The Judgement of Paris* for Philip IV of Spain, it appears that they did, in large part because he conceptualized nudity in a profoundly classical sense, which gave him licence to ignore critics who attempted to censor his nudes [Fig. 13.8].¹⁷ To Rubens, nudity embodied the power of love; it also represented truth—the naked truth—an abstract, aesthetic concept of beauty, which in Rubens's hands is made real as flesh.

Rembrandt, the Protestant breaker of rules, had a somewhat more fraught attitude, and pictorial approach, to the female nude. Whether he painted and drew Hendrickje in the nude is debated. If he did, he did so somewhat subversively and with little regard for the social norms of *burgerlijk* Amsterdam, just as his cohabitation with her was outside the law. While decorum might not have prevented Rembrandt from using his common-law wife, who his contemporaries referred to as living with him '*in Hoererijs*', like a whore, as a model for drawing from life in the studio, or from portraying her—recognizably her—(partially) nude as a historical figure, such as Callisto, Susanna, or Bathsheba, he had his own ethical standards [Fig. 13.10].¹⁸ To Rembrandt, female nudity seems to have represented a different kind of truth, one that encompassed truth to nature, with all its flaws, and emotional truth. It represented the vulnerability that comes with provoking erotic desire in men, whether in histories or in the studio, where Rembrandt appears to have empathized with the very act of modeling. The result is that, while his nudes celebrate erotic love as the painter's driving passion, they also evoke the discomfort of naked exposure in ways that engage the depths of the viewer's emotions.

16 Manuth V., "As stark naked as one could possibly be painted ...": The Reputation of the Nude Female Model in the Age of Rembrandt", in Lloyd Williams J., *Rembrandt's Women* [exh. cat., National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh; Royal Academy of Arts, London] (Munich: 2001) 47–53.

17 Rubens, *Judgement of Paris*, 1637–1638, Madrid, Prado.

18 Strauss W.L. – Meulen M. van der, *The Rembrandt Documents* (New York: 1979) 1654/11.

Spousal Love

For Rubens, as for Netherlandish painters more broadly, marriage had become an essential mark of virtuous respectability that gave licence to the notion that eros inspired the painter to heights of creativity. This domestication of love is celebrated in the period's most important secular love emblem book, *Amorum emblemata* of 1608, with which Rubens would have been deeply familiar, as its author, Otto van Veen, had been his most influential master.¹⁹ Rubens also would have known of pendant, pair, and family portraits, which, since the sixteenth century, had emphasized the artist's role as husband and virtuous citizen.²⁰

That the artist's marriage portrait had become a metaphor for the topos *liefde baart kunst* is exemplified by the grand (178 cm × 136.5 cm), yet stunningly informal, *Self-Portrait with Isabella Brant*, or *The Honeysuckle Bower*, of circa 1609, with which Rubens commemorated his marriage to Isabella Brant [Fig. 13.3]. The painting was made for her father, Jan Brant, who as a lawyer and secretary of the city was one of Antwerp's wealthiest, most distinguished citizens.²¹ With the portrait, Rubens cemented familial relationships, extolled the virtue of his wife, crafted himself as a member of Antwerp's patriciate, and emphasized the dignity and moral imperative of his profession. As a mark of his elevated professional standing Rubens holds the hilt of his sword; though not a noble, he carried it by rights, for in 1609 he was appointed court painter to the governors of the Netherlands, Archduke Albert and his wife Isabella. Rubens has attired himself in the height of fashion, from his bejeweled hat to his orange (*feuille morte*) silk stockings. That his exquisite, probably Italian, flat lace collar is left unfastened would have been strikingly unusual. Fashionable clothing carelessly neglected, and specifically the collar left casually open, was a mark of intellectual engagement, of the *poëtische geest* (poetic spirit) or melancholic temperament, and of the man impassioned by love.²²

19 Veen Otto van, *Amorum emblemata* (Antwerp, Venalia apud Auctorem: 1608).

20 Jongh, *Portretten van echt en trouw* 270–278; Birnfeld N., *Der Künstler und seine Frau: Studien zu Doppelbildnissen des 15.–17. Jahrhunderts* (Weimar: 2009) 23–47. See also Griffey, “Pro-Creativity” 27–66.

21 Wyhe C. van, “The Sartorial Ambitions of the Artist and His Wives: Identity and Attire in Rubens's Family Portraits”, in Beneden B. van (ed.), *Rubens in Private: The Master Portrays His Family* [exh. cat., Rubenshuis, Antwerp] (London: 2015) 98–121.

22 Chapman, H.P., *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Identity* (Princeton: 1990) 29–30; Wyhe, “Sartorial Ambitions” 113–115.



FIGURE 13.3 *Rubens, Self-Portrait with Isabella Brant (ca. 1609). Oil on canvas mounted on panel, 178 × 136.5 cm. Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek.*

PHOTO: BPK BILDAGENTUR / ALTE PINAKOTHEK / ART RESOURCE, NY.

Isabella's splendid, yet more conventional, lace ruff, embroidered stomacher, and satin garments identify her with the burgher elite, while her straw hat at once adds a pastoral note and likens her to the Infanta Isabella, who was known for wearing such a hat.²³ Together, they present as a formidable pair of prosperous Antwerp patricians. Yet for all their finery, they are innovatively casual, for they are seated—holding hands and Isabella seemingly on the ground—in the honeysuckle bower of a love garden. What comes across most clearly is their mutual bond of love and affection. Like fragrant honeysuckle, with its powerful vine signifying devoted, lasting love, they are visually intertwined. Isabella's humble pose evokes the Madonna of Humility and casts her as the modest, virtuous wife, who is both focus of the artist's attention and object of his desire. The portrait, at once, casts their marital union as based in love and elevates, to near-sacred status, the spousal love that inspires Rubens's art.

More broadly, by evoking the inspiring role of the spousal model/muse, Rubens's likenesses of Isabella helped to craft his image as devoted husband/painter. While there is no evidence that he drew or painted her in the nude, his formal portraits of her, such as *Portrait of Isabella Brant*, of circa 1625, are remarkably direct and intimate.²⁴ He also gave some of his Madonnas Isabella-like facial features, thereby evoking, and subtly identifying himself with, the first Christian painter, Saint Luke, and his divinely inspired image of the most beautiful of women.²⁵ After Isabella died, of the plague, in 1626. Rubens, bereft, expressed his grief in the rhetoric of love:

Truly I have lost an excellent companion, whom one could love—indeed had to love, with good reason—as having none of the faults of her sex. She had no capricious moods, and no feminine weakness, but was all goodness and honesty.²⁶

Prodigal Love

Rembrandt, like Rubens, crafted his image as painter inspired by conjugal love through his devoted portrayal of Saskia. He also pushed at the bounds of

²³ Wyhe, "Sartorial Ambitions" 104–105.

²⁴ Rubens, *Portrait of Isabella Brant*, ca. 1625, Florence, Uffizi.

²⁵ Rubens and Jan Brueghel, *Madonna in a Garland of Flowers*, ca. 1616/18, Munich, Alte Pinakothek. For sixteenth-century conjugal pendant portraits that were modeled after pendants of the Virgin Mary with a donor, see Woodall, *Anthonis Mor* 444–445.

²⁶ Magurn R. (ed. – trans.), *The Letters of Peter Paul Rubens* (Cambridge, MA: 1955) 136.

propriety in evoking the erotic love to which marriage gives licence. As with Rubens, and perhaps to an even greater extent, one senses that the rhetoric of love merges with Rembrandt's genuine affection for his wife. Saskia van Uylenburgh was the orphaned daughter of a burgomaster of Leeuwarden and the cousin of Hendrick van Uylenburgh, the Amsterdam painter-dealer for whom Rembrandt worked before he became a citizen of Amsterdam, in 1635, and could establish his own studio. Like many painters before him, Rembrandt elided familial and professional bonds by marrying into the family of his master or, in this case, his business partner. He marked their engagement with an intimate silverpoint drawing, which he inscribed, 'This is the likeness of my wife, when she was 21 years old, on the third day after we were betrothed, 8 June 1633'.²⁷ Saskia, in an informal state of 'undress', wearing a straw hat decorated with a wreath of flowers and a *nachthalsdoeck* (nightrail), proffers a flower, a trope of marriage portraits that signified love.²⁸

Between 1633 and her death in 1642, Rembrandt appears to have painted no conventional portrait of Saskia in contemporary dress; unlike Rubens, he used portraits to convey his indifference to, and distance from, Amsterdam burgher society. Just as he portrayed himself in a range of fanciful, imaginary guises, he romanticized Saskia by representing her in old-fashioned clothing that would have been called 'antique'. Some of these fanciful portraits, for example *Bust of a Young Woman Smiling* of 1633 and *Saskia van Uylenburgh, the Wife of the Artist*, have been treated as anonymous *tronies*, as if Saskia's identity is not important.²⁹ However, that *tronies* could simultaneously be portraits is confirmed by the 1637 description of 'a small *tronie* of an Eastern woman, the portrait (*conterfeisel*) of Hendrick van Uylenburgh's wife, after Rembrandt'.³⁰ Further, documentary evidence indicates that there was a demand among

27 Rembrandt, *Saskia van Uylenburgh*, 1633, silverpoint, Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. 'Dit is naer mijn huisvrouw geconterfeit do sij 21 jaer oud was den derden dach als wij getrouwt waren den 8 junijus 1633'.

28 For Saskia's clothing, see, Winkel M. de, "Fashion or Fancy? Some Interpretations of the Dress of Rembrandt's Women Re-Evaluated", in Lloyd Williams J., *Rembrandt's Women* [exh. cat., National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh; Royal Academy of Arts, London] (Munich: 2001) 56.

29 Rembrandt, *Bust of a Young Woman Smiling*, 1633, Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister; Rembrandt, *Saskia van Uylenburgh, the Wife of the Artist*, probably begun 1634/1635 and completed 1638/1640, Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art. Lloyd Williams, J. *Rembrandt's Women* [exh. cat., National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh; Royal Academy of Arts, London] (Munich: 2001) 92, 98.

30 Strauss – Meulen, *Rembrandt Documents* 1637/4: 'Noch een cleine oostersche vrouwen troni het conterfeisel van H. Ulenburghs huijsvrouwe nae Rembrandt'; and *ibid.*, 1657/2.

Amsterdam's most elite collectors for historicized portraits of both Rembrandt and Saskia. 'Rembrants Contrefeytsel antijscks' in the estate of the prominent collector-dealer Johannes de Renialme likely refers to Rembrandt's influential *Self-Portrait at Age 34* of 1640.³¹ The elegant half-length portrait of Saskia in profile and wearing sumptuous Renaissance clothing, *Saskia van Uylenburgh in a Red Hat*, is almost certainly the painting that Jan Six owned in the 1650s and that was described in his estate sale of 1702 as 'the wife of Rembrandt, painted by Rembrandt, powerfully and splendidly executed'.³²

By portraying Saskia as he portrayed himself, Rembrandt enveloped her in his private, artfully imagined world as his spouse and muse.³³ He also enlisted her in crafting his image as a virtuoso history painter who rivaled the great masters of the past, a project of self-making that also encompassed his house.³⁴ In Amsterdam, where high-end paintings were typically bought directly from painters and where *liefhebbers* and artists thrived on a culture of visiting studios, often in artists' homes, Rembrandt's circle of clients and friends would have recognized Saskia in his paintings. Later, in 1707, the classicist painter and art theorist Gerard de Lairese criticized painters who used their wives, maid-servants, and family members as models.³⁵ But, in the mid-seventeenth century, a number of artists, including Gerard ter Borch, Frans van Mieris, Jan Steen, and probably Vermeer, used their familiars as recognizable models, whether in tronies, historicized portraits, genre scenes, or histories, to enhance both the reality effect of paintings and their appeal to buyers.

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- 31 Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait at Age 34*, 1640, London, National Gallery. Chapman, *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits* 45–46, 69–78; White C. – Buvelot Q. (eds.), *Rembrandt by Himself* [exh. cat., National Gallery, London; Mauritshuis, The Hague] (London: 1999) 173–175.
 - 32 Rembrandt, *Saskia van Uylenburgh in a Red Hat (Half-Length Portrait of Saskia van Uylenburgh)*, ca. 1633–1642, Kassel, Gemäldegalerie. 'De Vrouw van Rembrandt, door Rembrandt geschilderd, krachtig en heerlyk uitgevoerd.' Strauss – Van der Meulen, *Rembrandt Documents* 1652/7, 1658/16; Wetering E. van de (ed.), *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings*, 6 vols. (New York: 2015) VI, 527; Dickey S.S., "Rembrandt and Saskia: Art, Commerce, and the Poetics of Portraiture", in Chong A. – Zell M. (eds.), *Rethinking Rembrandt* (Zwolle: 2002) 28–29, 211.
 - 33 Alpers S. *Rembrandt's Enterprise* (Chicago: 1988) 58–69; Dickey, "Rembrandt and Saskia" 17–47, 208–217.
 - 34 Chapman H.P., "Rembrandt on Display. The Rembrandthuis as Portrait of an Artist", in Chapman H.P. – Scholten F. – Woodall J. (eds.), *Arts of Display, Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 65 (2015) 202–239.
 - 35 Lairese Gerard de, *Het groot schilderboek*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, Willem de Coup: 1707) I, 173–174, with the marginal text 'Misbruik in't na't leven schilderen' (misuse in painting from life).

In two large pastoral portraits, *Flora* of 1634 and *Saskia van Uylenburgh in Arcadian Costume* of 1635, Saskia assumes the guise of Flora, the goddess of flowers and fertility, who, in the seventeenth century, as *Flora primavera* and *Flora meretrix*, embodied both chaste conjugal love and illicit erotic love.³⁶ Whereas Ovid characterized Flora as the goddess who ‘warns us to use life’s beauty as it blooms’, she was also thought to have been a Roman prostitute.³⁷ The currency of Flora’s illicit aspect in Amsterdam circa 1640 is confirmed by Joachim von Sandrart’s engraving of Titian’s *Flora*, the caption to which implies that Flora’s love is that of a courtesan, available to many.³⁸ While Rembrandt’s paintings participated in the then-current vogue for pastoral portraits, they are set apart by the elaborateness of Saskia’s romanticized historical guise.³⁹ Flora’s traditional association with prostitution suggests that Rembrandt was operating outside the burgher husband/painter mode and, instead, turned to antiquity for a more timeless way of casting himself as the devoted lover inspired by his beautiful model.

Less elaborate but equally imaginative is *Saskia with a Flower* of 1641, which Rembrandt based on Titian’s *Flora*.⁴⁰ In emulating Titian, Rembrandt changed the subject of his picture to cast Saskia as a maker of beautiful things and, hence, as a loving partner in his artistic endeavours. Stephanie Dickey has identified Saskia as Glycera, who, according to Pliny, first invented wreaths of flowers and was the lover of the painter Pausias.⁴¹ In the words of Franciscus Junius, in *The Painting of the Ancients* of 1638, ‘Pausias, being exceedingly in love with his country woman Glycera, left a most famous Picture, known everywhere by the name of *Stephanoplocos*, that is, a woman garland-maker; and this hath ever been esteemed his best work, because he was enforced thereunto by the

36 Rembrandt, *Flora*, 1634, St. Petersburg, Hermitage; Rembrandt, *Saskia van Uylenburgh in Arcadian Costume*, 1635, London, National Gallery.

37 Ovid, *Fasti*, trans. Boyle A.J. – Woodard R.D. (London: 2000) 5: 183–184, 191–192, 353; Held J., “Flora, Goddess and Courtesan”, in Meiss M. (ed.), *De Artibus Opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky* 2 vols. (New York: 1961) I 201–18; II 69–74.

38 Held, “Flora” 212–213.

39 Kettering A.M., *The Dutch Arcadia: Pastoral Art and its Audience in the Golden Age* (Montclair, NJ: 1983).

40 Rembrandt, *Saskia with a Flower*, 1641, Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister. Between 1638 and 1641 Titian’s *Flora* (Florence, Uffizi) was in Amsterdam, in the collection of Alfonso Lopez.

41 Dickey S.S., “*Saskia as Glycera*: Rembrandt’s Emulation of an Antique Prototype”, in Boschloo A.W.A., et al. (eds.), *Aemulatio. Imitation, Emulation and Invention in Netherlandish Art from 1500 to 1800. Essays in Honour of Eric Jan Sluiter* (Zwolle: 2011) 233–47.

extremitie of his passion'.⁴² Saskia's direct gaze—she has eyes only for him—her proffered carnation, and the flowers on the plinth beside her, identify her as Glycera, and transform Rembrandt into Pausias, painting her portrait, inspired by 'the extremitie of his passion'.⁴³

The devotion with which Rembrandt portrayed Saskia in images that evoke erotic love sheds light on the large double portrait in which he cast her in a seemingly unflattering guise: *Rembrandt and Saskia in the Parable of the Prodigal Son*, which is usually dated to 1635, the year after their marriage [Fig. 13.4].⁴⁴ Here, Rembrandt chafes against the moral strictures of conjugal love to lay bare the power of illicit erotic love. With Saskia sitting on his lap, Rembrandt, laughing, raises his tall beer glass. Their lavish clothing and the peacock pie comment on worldly excess. A tally board hanging on the wall, at left, identifies the setting as a tavern.⁴⁵ This painting was long interpreted as Rembrandt and Saskia flaunting their newfound wealth in the face of their staid society, or in response to accusations from Saskia's family that they were squandering her inheritance. More likely it is a historicized portrait in which Rembrandt plays the role of the Biblical Prodigal Son, or a secularized prodigal, squandering his patrimony in a tavern, in which case Rembrandt's helpmate has become his buttoned-up, somewhat inscrutable whore.⁴⁶

42 Junius Franciscus, *The Painting of the Ancients* (London, Richard Hodgkinsonne: 1638; reprint, Gregg International—Westmead: 1972) bk. 1, chap iv 49. Junius, who was a philologist and librarian to Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, initially published his theoretical treatise on classical art in Latin, as *De Pictura Veterum*, in 1637. For expansions in the Dutch translation of 1641, see Weststeijn T., *Art and Antiquity in the Netherlands and Britain: The Vernacular Arcadia of Franciscus Junius (1591–1677)* (Leiden: 2015) 103–148.

43 *A Portrait of Isabella Brant as Glycera* of ca. 1620, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, from Rubens's circle may have provided a precedent for Rembrandt's conceit.

44 This may be the 'conterfeytsel van Rembrandt van Rijn en zijn huysvrouw' in the 1677 inventory of the estate of the widow of Lucas Crayers, the man appointed Titus's guardian after Rembrandt's bankruptcy, which would suggest that the painting remained in Rembrandt's possession. See Chapman, *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits* 114–120; Wetering, *Corpus* IV 217–232 and VI 547–548.

45 See Wetering *Corpus* VI 547, for the technical analysis which shows that originally a woman playing a lute stood between Rembrandt and Saskia and that the painting was originally considerably larger, which suggest that it was a fuller tavern scene before it was cut down.

46 Bergström I., "Rembrandt's Double-Portrait of Himself and Saskia: A Tradition Transformed", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 17 (1966) 143–169; Chapman, *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits* 114–120.



FIGURE 13.4 *Rembrandt, Rembrandt and Saskia in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (ca. 1635). Oil on canvas, 161 × 131 cm. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister.*
 PHOTO: ERICH LESSING / ART RESOURCE, NY.

Especially among Protestants in the northern Netherlands, the Prodigal's welcome home by his father was taken as a metaphor for God's loving acceptance of all sinners. But the currency of the pictorial type as the vehicle for self-portraits suggests that it was meant to evoke both the immoderate liminality of the painter and his particular profligacy, which is that his work is

inspired by erotic love. Although erotic love was permitted within marriage, as a means of procreation and source of pleasure, the imagery of sinful carousing evokes passion unbridled and outside the bounds of convention.⁴⁷ Albrecht Dürer's engraved *Return of the Prodigal Son*, which Van Mander described as a self-portrait, may have originated the artist's identification with the prodigal. More directly relevant to Rembrandt's guise as wastrel is Van Mander's praise of a painting in which Hans von Aachen portrayed himself laughing and drinking with a lute-playing woman.⁴⁸ That Frans van Mieris, Gabriel Metsu, and Jan Steen would soon represent themselves drinking with their wives confirms not just that Rembrandt's contemporaries recognized him and Saskia in the *Prodigal Son* but that they regarded it as a meaningful guise that spoke to the condition of the artist whose wine- and Eros-inspired creativity might come at the expense of decorous behavior.⁴⁹

Even though Rembrandt could not have seen Rubens's *Self-Portrait with Isabella Brant*, I would like to suggest that he knew of it and painted *Rembrandt and Saskia in the Parable of the Prodigal Son* in response to it. Suppose Rembrandt had heard that Rubens had painted an extravagant marriage portrait set in a love garden. Frans Hals, in *The Marriage Portrait of Isaac Massa and Beatrix van der Laan* had already responded to Rubens's double portrait.⁵⁰ Further, Rembrandt knew people—Constantijn Huygens, the secretary to the stadholder of the Dutch Republic, for one—who favored Rubens, whose portrait would have been the talk of *liefhebbers* and artists. At just this time,

47 Wetering, *Corpus* VI 547–548.

48 Van Mander, *Schilder-Boeck*, fols. 209 verso and 290 recto. See Hans van Aachen, *Laughing Couple, Self-Portrait of the Artist with his Wife*, 1596, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

49 Frans van Mieris, *Inn Scene*, 1658, The Hague, Mauritshuis; Gabriel Metsu, *The Artist and His Wife in a Tavern*, 1661, Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie; Jan Steen, *The Revelers*, ca. 1658–1660, St. Petersburg, Hermitage. Johannes Vermeer appears to have portrayed himself in *The Procuress*, 1656 (Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie). See Chapman, *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits* 118–19; Chapman H.P., "Jan Steen as Family Man: Self-Portrayal as an Experiential Mode of Painting" in *Image and Self-Image in Netherlandish Art, Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 46 (1995) 368–393; Cartwright I., "Hoe schilder, hoe wilder: Dissolute Self-Portraits in Dutch and Flemish Art" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maryland, 2007); Dickey S.S., "Strategies of Self-Portraiture from Hans von Aachen to Rembrandt," in Konecny L. – Vácha S. (eds.), *Hans von Aachen in Context. Proceedings of the International Conference Prague 22–25 September 2010* (Prague: 2012) 72–81.

50 Frans Hals, *Marriage Portrait of Isaac Massa and Beatrix van der Laan*, 1622, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. Jongh, *Portretten van echt en trouw* 124–130.

from the early through mid 1630s, Rembrandt, encouraged by Huygens, was engaged in the challenge of emulating—imitating with the intent to surpass—Rubens in his own more naturalistic, more emotionally truthful, and somewhat irreverent manner.⁵¹ He responded directly to prototypes by Rubens in *Christ on the Cross* of 1631; *The Descent from the Cross* of 1633; and two self-portraits, an etching of 1631 and the painting dated 1632 in Glasgow, which allude to Rubens's *Self-Portrait* of 1623.⁵² With the ambitious *Blinding of Samson* of 1636, the culmination of his project to redo Rubens according to nature, Rembrandt transformed Rubens's heroic *Laocoön*-based *Prometheus Bound* into a gruesome, boldly real scene of Old Testament torment.⁵³ This is presumably the painting that Rembrandt tried, unsuccessfully, to give to Huygens in thanks for serving as agent for Frederick Hendrik's *Passion Series*, and in hopes of receiving payment.⁵⁴ Rembrandt might have expected Huygens to appreciate the *Samson*'s inventive 'dissimilar similarity'. As Franciscus Junius advised, 'the artists who surpass all others are those who diligently pursue the old art with a new argument, thus adroitly bestowing their paintings with the pleasurable enjoyment of dissimilar similarity'.⁵⁵ We can only speculate as to whether it was the subversion of Rubens's ideal classicism, or the idea of being further beholden to Rembrandt, that led Huygens to refuse Rembrandt's gift.

Reconceptualizing Rubens's conceit of a formal marriage portrait, set in a love garden, as a shockingly unconventional image of prodigality would have achieved a comparable, and pointed, dissimilar similarity. In sixteenth-century imagery, the episode of the Prodigal squandering his inheritance

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- 51 For Rembrandt's emulation of Rubens, and Huygens's encouragement of it, see Chapman, *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits* 59–69; Schama S, *Rembrandt's Eyes* (New York: 1999), esp. 27–38.
 - 52 Rembrandt, *Christ on the Cross*, 1631, Le Mas-d'Agenais, Église Saint-Vincent; Rembrandt, *The Descent from the Cross*, 1633, Munich, Alte Pinakothek; Rubens, *Self-Portrait*, 1623, London, Royal Collection.
 - 53 Rembrandt, *Blinding of Samson*, 1636, Frankfurt, Städel Museum; Rubens, *Prometheus Bound*, 1611–1612, Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art.
 - 54 Lawrence, C., "'Worthy of Milord's house?' Rembrandt, Huygens and Dutch Classicism", *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift* 54 (1985) 16–26; Zell, M., "The Gift Among Friends: Rembrandt's Art in the Network of His Patronal and Social Relations", in Chong A. – Zell M. (eds.), *Rethinking Rembrandt* (Zwolle: 2002) 177–183.
 - 55 Junius Franciscus, *De schilderconst der oude* (Middelburg, Zacharias Roman: 1641) 29: 'die Konsteners spannen, mijnes dunckens, de kroone boven de andere, de welke d'oude Konst ontrent een nieuwe argument naerstighlick oeffenen, om haere Schilderyen door dit middle met het aengenaeme vermaeck van een ongelijcke gelijkheyt behendighlick te vervullen'; cited in Sluijter E.J., *Rembrandt's Rivals: History Painting in Amsterdam 1630–1650* (Amsterdam: 2015) 70.

typically took place in a tavern. However, the early seventeenth century saw the development of another pictorial type, an outdoor scene in which the wastrel is seated on the ground, often with a glass of wine in his hand and reclining in the lap of a young woman. For example, in a series of four prints of the *Parable of the Prodigal Son* of 1608, by Claes Jansz Visscher, after David Vinckboons, the Prodigal's carousing takes place in the arbor of a tavern. At the same time, secularized scenes of modern-day prodigality, in 'outdoor merry companies' set in countryside love gardens, such as Vinckboons's *Garden Party* of circa 1610, still carried connotation of the Prodigal squandering his inheritance.⁵⁶ In response to Rubens's conjugal love garden, Rembrandt evokes a different kind of love, the erotic love that ignites passion and moves the artist to heights of creativity. It is a transgression in biblical guise, in which Saskia, as complicit muse, is the object of the prodigal's desires.

In Rembrandt's hierarchy of artistic mediums, paintings, especially in large format, were reserved for histories with grand conceits and portraits, drawings could be for the observed reality of daily life, and prints often fell somewhere in between. In his etched *Self-Portrait with Saskia*, of 1636, Rembrandt made explicit Saskia's role as a presence in the studio, as domesticated model/muse [Fig. 13.5]. With her seated beside him, Rembrandt represented himself in the process of drawing from a mirror, on paper or perhaps directly on an etching plate. The print has a true-to-life and of-the-moment quality, yet they wear old-fashioned attire. She is his loving helpmate and companion in his world of role playing and dressing up. Although Rembrandt does not appear to have drawn or painted Saskia nude, he did draw her in states of vulnerable intimacy. Between 1635 and 1641, Rembrandt and Saskia had four children, but only Titus, the last one, lived. And Saskia was not well. Before she died, in 1642 at age 30, Rembrandt must have spent hours at her bedside. His intimate, loving, from-life drawings and etchings of Saskia in bed show her in a state as vulnerable as nakedness. Recent scholars have treated these drawings as images of anonymous sick or sleeping women.⁵⁷ However, Saskia is clearly identifiable in the etched *Sheet of Studies with Saskia in Bed* of about 1641; that many, if not all, of Rembrandt's sketches of a sick woman, from the late 1630s up to about 1640, represent Saskia is likely, given her illness and Rembrandt's devotion both to her and to the rhetoric of conjugal love.

⁵⁶ David Vinckboons, *Garden Party*, ca. 1610, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

⁵⁷ Lloyd Williams, *Rembrandt's Women* 122–129, 171, 174–175, reproduces many of these drawings and treats them as images of anonymous women.



FIGURE 13.5 *Rembrandt, Self-Portrait with Saskia (1636). Etching, 104 × 95 mm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.*

PHOTO: RIJKSMUSEUM.

Rubens Remarried and Liberated

In 1630, at age 53, Rubens married again. Helena Fourment, the daughter of an Antwerp silk and tapestry merchant, was 16. As he later explained to his friend, the French intellectual and collector Nicolas Fabri de Peiresc:

I made up my mind to marry again, since I was not yet inclined to live the abstinent life of a celibate, thinking that, if we must give the first place to continence, we may enjoy licit pleasures with thankfulness (*frui mur*

licita voluptate cum gratiarum actione). I have taken a young wife of honest but middle-class family, although everyone tried to persuade me to make a court marriage. But I feared pride, that inherent vice of the nobility, particularly in that sex, and that is why I chose one who would not blush to see me take my brushes in hand. And to tell the truth, it would have been hard for me to exchange the priceless treasure of liberty for the embraces of an old woman.⁵⁸

Through the rhetoric of love, Rubens displayed his artistic virility and alluded to the inspiring power of conjugal love. His preference for an honest burgher wife, like his refusal to live at court, speaks to the notion that his honour derived not from the nobility of blood but from his talent and his noble profession.⁵⁹

Rubens's lavish first portrait of Helena embodies amorous expectation, as it freely acknowledges that erotic love is sanctioned by conjugal love [Fig. 13.6]. Compared to the demure Isabella, Helena, enlivened by her freely painted expanse of billowing drapery and sexualized by her décolletage, leans toward the viewer, who is Rubens. The orange blossom in her hair signifies the love and devotion of marriage. Her brocade wedding attire and elaborate brooch were the latest fashion from France, as was her coiffure, with its short bangs, some of her curly hair cut short at the sides, and the rest tied up into a bun.⁶⁰ Rubens uses this hairstyle to distinguish Helena not only in his many portraits of her, but also in the *Garden of Love*, of circa 1633, a poetic allegory of conjugal love, as well as in other mythologies.⁶¹

Helena appears in the nude in several of these. In the *Judgement of Paris*, which Rubens painted on commission for Philip IV of Spain in 1637–1638, Helena is the voluptuous Venus at center; we recognize her by her features and hairstyle.⁶² Rubens's contemporaries recognized her, too. Of the *Judgement of Paris*, Cardinal Infante Ferdinand, Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, wrote from Antwerp to his brother Philip IV that 'the Venus in the center is a very good portrait (*retrato*) of his [Rubens's] wife, who is certainly the handsomest woman to be seen here.'⁶³ At the same time, he warned that the painting had

58 Letter, December 18, 1634, in Magurn, *Letters of Rubens* 393.

59 Chapman, *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits* 67–69; Woodall, *Anthonis Mor* 454.

60 Belkin K.L., "La belle Hélène' and Her Beauty Aids: A New Look at *Het Pelsken*", in Stighelen K. van de (ed.), *Munuscula Amicorum: Contributions on Rubens and His Colleagues in Honour of Hans Vlieghe* (Turnhout: 2006) 299–310; Wyhe, "Sartorial Ambitions" 103–104.

61 Rubens, *Garden of Love*, ca. 1633, Madrid, Prado.

62 Rubens, *Judgement of Paris*, 1637–1638, Madrid, Prado.

63 Quoted and translated in Belkin K.L., *Rubens* (London: 1998) 244. For the letter see, Geraerts M., "Rubens's Judgement of Paris for Philip IV. Attitudes to the Nude in Spanish Royal Correspondence", in Velde C. van de (ed.), *Classical Mythology in the Netherlands*



FIGURE 13.6 *Rubens, Helena Fourment in her Wedding Dress (1630–1631). Oil on panel, 163.5 × 136.9 cm. Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek.*

PHOTO: BPK BILDAGENTUR / ALTE PINAKOTHEK / ART RESOURCE, NY.

a problem, '*una falta*': the nudity of the three goddesses, which, he reported, Rubens refused to change, saying that the nudity was 'essential, so that one

in the Age of Renaissance and Baroque: Proceedings of the Conference, Antwerp, 19–21 May 2005 (Leuven: 2009) 113: 'La Venus que esta de enmedio es retrato muy parecido de su misma mugger que sin duda es lo major de lo que ahora hay aqui'.

could see the *valentia* (valour or bravery) of the painting.⁶⁴ Nudity was not merely central to the painting's story—the goddesses were asked to disrobe—and message about the consequences of beauty and desire, but it was essential to the painting's '*valentia*', its valour, excellence, worth, and power, as well as to Rubens's brand.

Recent scholars, citing both prohibitions against nudity in Counter-Reformation Antwerp and past artistic practice, have argued that Rubens did not work from the live female model.⁶⁵ Perhaps early in his career he used exclusively male models, in the manner of Michelangelo.⁶⁶ However, it is inconceivable that an artist so committed to lifelikeness would not have studied the female nude from life. The practice of using nude female models was sanctioned by antiquity—Apelles is said to have painted Campaspe nude—and documentary and visual evidence confirms that Rubens did just that.⁶⁷ As a letter of 1623 indicates, when Rubens was in Paris to paint the *Marie de' Medici Cycle*, he ordered up three female models, 'the two Capaio ladies of the Rue du Verbois, and also the little niece Louysa. For I intend to make three studies of Sirens in life size', presumably in preparation for the massive nude sea creatures in the *Disembarkation at Marseilles*.⁶⁸ While only a few life drawings of female nudes remain, Rubens apparently made more, according to the 1679 inventory of Erasmus II Quellinus, who had collaborated with Rubens in the 1630s.⁶⁹

The practice was also essential to Rubens's brand as a painter of beautiful women. As Karolien de Clippel has demonstrated, by the 1620s Rubens was famed for his sensual female nudes, which he painted, with all their living, colourful flesh and lush corpulence—the accidents of nature—to look like they were made from life. In 1639, when Huygens wrote, on behalf of Frederick Hendrick, to ask Rubens to paint an over mantel of an invention of his

64 Geraerts, "Rubens's Judgement of Paris" 113–128: 'pero dice que es menester para que se vea la valentia de la pintura'. Also Clippel, "Altering, Hiding and Resisting" 216–218.

65 Kok, "Female Nude" 35–50.

66 Critics disagree as to whether Rubens's life drawing *Female Nude: Study for Psyche* of ca. 1609–1612 was made from a male or female model. Compare Jaffé D. et al., *Rubens: A Master in the Making* [exh. cat., National Gallery, London] (London: 2005) 110 and Logan – Plomp, *Rubens Drawings* 147–148.

67 Pliny, *Natural History*, 35.36, 85–87. Pliny, *Natural History*, 35. 36. 64 and 36.4. 20–21, also reports that the five beautiful women that Zeuxis used to paint an ideal beauty were nude and that Praxiteles modeled his nude *Aphrodite of Knidos* after the courtesan Phryne.

68 Rubens, *Disembarkation at Marseilles*, Paris, Louvre. Magurn, *Letters of Rubens* 90.

69 Duverger E., *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*, 12 vols. (Brussels: 1984) x, no. 3333, 359–362, 364. For an early, unsubstantiated report that Helena Fourment destroyed nudes by Rubens after his death, see Logan – Plomp, *Rubens Drawings* 256, 294–295.

choosing, the only stipulation was that the beauty of the women be elaborated 'con amore, studio e diligenza'.⁷⁰ The unprecedented naturalness of Rubens's nudes arose from a practice, and a theory of imitation, that insisted on transforming the study of classical statues through selective imitation of nature, so that, in Rubens's words, they 'did not in the least smell of stone'.⁷¹ Rubens's female nudes epitomize working *naer het leven*, from life, meaning from the classical statue, the live model, and the model posed like a statue, in the service of invention, of creating *uyt den gheest*, from the imagination. Although the complexities of the concept *naer het leven* have generated much scholarship, evidence suggests that, in studio practice, the term referred to drawing from the still model, whether clothed, nude, or sculpted. Hence Rembrandt, in the inventory made at the time of his bankruptcy in 1656, listed an album of his drawings after statues as made *naer het leven*; Gerard ter Borch Sr. labelled his young sons' drawings '*nae het leven*' only if they represented a still figure (drawings of figures in motion were considered to be inventions and labeled 'inventor'); and Samuel van Hoogstraten refers to students in academies drawing male and female nudes *naer het leven*.⁷²

Further, it is hard to imagine that Rubens did not base his female nudes, however much he idealized them, on observation. Rubens was acutely aware of the differences between the male body and the female body, as was his audience. As Van Mander wrote, 'the woman should not have any hardness in the muscles, which should recede and fade softly in tender flesh, with folds and creases'.⁷³ Indeed, the female figure that was at once ideally beautiful and more convincingly lifelike than ever before was Rubens's great invention. Like Cesare Ripa, who personified the allegory of Truth as a naked woman, Rubens represented Truth nude in *Time Revealing Truth* from the Medici Cycle and on

70 Clippel K. de, "Defining Beauty: Rubens's Female Nudes", in Lehmann A.-S. – Roodenburg H. (eds.), *Body and Embodiment in Netherlandish Art, Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 58 (2008) 133–159.

71 Rubens Peter Paul, "On the Imitation of Statues", cited in Muller J.M., "Rubens's Theory and Practice of the Imitation of Art", *Art Bulletin* 64 (1982) 229–247.

72 Strauss – Meulen, *Rembrandt Documents* 1656/12, no. 261; Kettering A.M. *Drawings from the Ter Borch Studio Estate* 2 vols. (The Hague: 1988) II, cat. nos. H 18, 59, 60, 68–70, 80, 87, 89, 176, and M 36, 44, 53 and 54; Hoogstraten Samuel van, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderconst* (Rotterdam, François van Hoogstraeten: 1678, reprint, Utrecht: 1969) 294. For a recent discussion of *naer het leven*, see Felfe R., "'Naer het Leven', 'Nach dem leben'. Eine sprachliche Formel zwischen Übertragungsvorgängen und ästhetischer Vermittlung", in: Fritsche C. – Leonhard K. – Weber G. (eds), *Ad fontes. Niederländische Kunst des 17. Jahrhunderts in Quellen* (Petersberg: 2013) 155–185.

73 Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* 272; Mander Karel van, *Den Grondt der edel vry Schilderconst*, Miedema H. (ed.), 2 vols. (Utrecht: 1973) I, fol. 11 verso (iii, 14).

his frontispiece to a book of commentaries on the Gospel of Luke.⁷⁴ However, whereas for Ripa Truth's nakedness attested to her natural plainness, plain speaking, and lack of ornamentation, in Rubens's art we see the visual expression of the naked Truth's association with Beauty.⁷⁵

Would he have posed his beautiful young wife nude in the studio? Some critics have argued that, by the mid-1630s, he did not need to, having so internalized his trademark female nude.⁷⁶ But, then again, maybe he had specific intentions in mind when he chose, instead of a noblewoman, a 'middle-class' wife 'who would not blush to see me take my brushes in hand'. Usually interpreted as his modest comment on his trade—being a painter was no occupation for a real nobleman—perhaps his statement refers to what might actually cause a woman to blush: drawing and painting her in the nude. Moreover, giving his voluptuous, classical-ish nudes Helena's features and coiffure was perhaps not as transgressive as it might seem. Within the framework of marriage, Rubens could claim to be impassioned by love, but only because her body, at least conceptually, was not entirely her own.⁷⁷ Just as Campaspe was Alexander's property to give away, Helena was by marital rights Rubens's to display. Further, Rubens's commitment to the classical ideal, through antique statuary and mythological subjects, and the fundamental basis of his nudes in his imagination, meant that he could use his wife as model with decorum and eloquence, and out of love, in the service of a truly classical celebration of the beautiful human body. This would have been acceptable in a court context. Philip IV would have recognized that, in painting Venus undraped, Rubens claimed to be a second Apelles, and cast his patron in the role of Alexander the Great.

Propriety may have prevented Rubens from painting his wife nude for his Antwerp patrons. Nevertheless, he did so, in notably more sexualized ways, in several pictures that he kept until his death; whether these remained strictly private or had a viewership we do not know. *The Feast of Venus*, of 1636–1637, appears to have been inspired both by Titian's famous *Worship of Venus* and by ancient literary sources: one, the description of a lost Greek painting, and the other Ovid's description the feast of Venus Verticordia, in which the women of Latium make sacrifices to Venus in hopes of being preserved from uncontrollable desire.⁷⁸ However, as Marie Geraerts has argued, the painting celebrates

74 Ripa Cesare, *Iconologia* (Rome, Appresso Lepido Facij: 1603) 500.

75 Expressed as 'Truth is beauty, beauty truth' in John Keats's poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn" of 1819.

76 Kok, "Female Nude" 36–45.

77 Thøfner, "Het Pelsken" 1–33.

78 Rubens, *Feast of Venus*, 1636–1637, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum; Titian, *Worship of Venus*, 1518–1519, Madrid, Prado.



FIGURE 13.7 Rubens, *The Feast of Venus* (ca. 1636–1637). Oil on canvas, 217 × 350 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum. Detail, lower left corner.

PHOTO: ERICH LESSING / ART RESOURCE, NY.

a spectrum of types of love, from chaste and conjugal to erotic.⁷⁹ Rubens's embrace of pure erotic desire is conveyed through the figure resembling Helena, in the lower left corner. She plays the young nymph who is lifted aloft by, and who gently but lewdly holds the horns of, a lascivious, tongue-wagging satyr [Fig. 13.7].

Rubens also painted Helena as the nude Venus in one of the most intimate, most sensual portraits of all time, *Het Pelsken*, the little fur, which dates to about 1638, when Helena would have been 24, Rubens 60 [Fig. 13.8].⁸⁰ *Het Pelsken* transforms the modest pose of the *Venus Pudica* into something deliberately

79 Fehrl P., "Rubens' *Feast of Venus Verticordia*", *Burlington Magazine* 64 (1972) 159–162, no. 828; Geraerts M., "Rubens's *Feast of Venus* Reconsidered. The Turning of Hearts to or from Love? Sensuality or Virtue?", in Clippel K. de – Cauteren K. van – Stighelen K. van der (eds.), *The Nude and the Norm in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Turnhout: 2011) 159–180.

80 Thøfner, "Het Pelsken" 1–33. According to Van Mander, *Schilder-Boeck*, fol. 252 verso, Pieter Vlerick (1539–81) used his wife as the model for a painting of Venus.



FIGURE 13.8 *Rubens, Helena Fourment (Het Pelsken)*
(ca. 1636/1638). Oil on panel, 176 × 83 cm. Vienna,
Kunsthistorisches Museum.

PHOTO: ERICH LESSING / ART RESOURCE, NY.

revealing and overtly erotic. Rubens derived the fur-lined coat that Helena wraps around herself so provocatively from Titian's *Woman in a Fur*, probably a portrait of a courtesan, which Rubens had copied around 1630. (In another Antwerp domestication of the artist's model, a print by Lucas Vorsterman, after Rubens's copy of a different courtesan portrait by Titian, identifies the sitter as Titian's pregnant fiancée or wife.)⁸¹ Recent technical examination has revealed that *Het Pelsken* initially included a fountain that featured a peeing boy of an antique type. It has been suggested that Rubens painted it out because of its erotic connotations.⁸² Or perhaps it was because he wanted to evoke not bathing in a love garden but going to bed.

As Kristin Belkin has argued, a drawing that shows Helena in bed helps to illuminate the painting [Fig. 13.9]. Her chemise beside her, she wears nothing but a white linen band, a *bandeau*, across her forehead, which she also wears in *Het Pelsken*.⁸³ Women wore these at night, covered with cream, to prevent wrinkles. (In some of Rembrandt's etchings and drawings, Saskia and/or other sick women wear a wider *bandeau* that may have contained medicinal ointment.)⁸⁴ Through Helena, Rubens, advanced in age, crafted himself as the new Apelles, his passion ignited by his beautiful spousal muse. Rubens left *Het Pelsken* to Helena in his will. She, in turn, initially left it to her second husband but then changed her mind.⁸⁵

Rembrandt's Naked Nudes

Hendrickje Stoffels is emblematic of Rembrandt's increasing non-conformity, but whether that non-conformity extended to his representing her in the nude remains a question. After Saskia's death in 1642, Rembrandt had a rocky

81 For Lucas Vorsterman, after Rubens's copy of Titian, *Portrait of a Courtesan in a Fur and a Hat*, engraving, London, British Museum, and its inscription, see Thøfner, "Het Pelsken" 10–12, fig. 1.7 (without inscription).

82 Stighelen K van der – Snickt G van der – Gruber G – Janssens K, "Helena Fourment Further Uncovered: A New Interpretation of *Het Pelsken* Based on Recent Analytical Imaging", in Beneden B. van (ed), *Rubens in Private: The Master Portrays His Family* [exh. cat. Rubenshuis, Antwerp] (London: 2015) 76–97.

83 Also called a *handon* or frontlet. See Winkel, "Fashion or Fancy" 56–57, n. 15; Belkin, "La belle Hélène" 304–306.

84 For example, Rembrandt, *Sheet of Studies with Saskia in Bed*, ca. 1641, etching; Rembrandt, *Two Studies of a Woman*, ca. 1635–1640, drawing, and *A Woman Sitting Up in Bed with a Baby*, ca. 1635–1636, drawing, both London, Courtauld Institute Gallery.

85 Thøfner, "Het Pelsken" 1.



FIGURE 13.9 *Rubens, Study of a Seated Nude Woman. Red and black chalk, heightened with white, 46.3 × 28.2 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre.*

PHOTO: © RMN-GRAND PALAIS / ART RESOURCE, NY.

interlude with Titus's nursemaid Geertge Dircx, who sued him for breach of promise of marriage; she ended up in the *spinhuis* (house of correction). Then he settled down with Hendrickje, a sergeant's daughter, who between 1647 and 1649 entered his household as dry nurse to Titus, but whom he could not marry without violating stipulations in Saskia's will. In 1654, pregnant with their daughter Cornelia, Hendrickje was called before the church council and accused of living like a whore with Rembrandt. After Rembrandt's bankruptcy in 1656, itself a sign of his failure to conform to societal norms, Hendrickje and Titus took over his business.⁸⁶

Unlike with Saskia, there is no documented likeness of Hendrickje. However, Rembrandt's longstanding practice of making inventive, historicized portraits of his familiars, above all Saskia but also Titus, in *Titus at His Desk*, 1655, and *Titus as a Monk*, 1660, helps to confirm that Hendrickje inspired a number of paintings.⁸⁷ The Louvre's *Portrait of Hendrickje Stoffels* is thought to be a pendant to Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait* of 1654 in Kassel, which could indicate that, although they never married, Rembrandt here put Hendrickje forward as his spouse, in the very year that she, pregnant with Cornelia, was punished by her church council.⁸⁸ Fanciful portraits that represent sitters with the same facial features include the direct, intimate *Portrait of Hendrickje Stoffels (Hendrickje in a Fur Wrap)* of circa 1654–56; *Hendrickje in an Open Half-Door*, of circa 1654, which is based on a Venetian prototype attributed to Palma Vecchio from the collection of Andrea Vendramin; and the Metropolitan Museum's *Hendrickje Stoffels* of about 1655 to 1660.⁸⁹ From the evidence of these portrait likenesses, it has long been suggested that Rembrandt represented Hendrickje, probably with their daughter Cornelia, in *Venus and Cupid* of about 1657.⁹⁰ If this

86 Crenshaw P., *Rembrandt's Bankruptcy* (Cambridge: 2006) 145–146.

87 Rembrandt, *Titus at his Desk*, 1655, Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans; Rembrandt, *Titus as a Monk*, 1660, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum. For a discussion of the likenesses of Titus, see Wetering, *Corpus* VI 631–32.

88 Rembrandt, *Portrait of Hendrickje Stoffels*, ca. 1654, Paris, Louvre; Rembrandt, *Self-Portrait*, 1654, Kassel, Gemäldegalerie. Wetering, *Corpus* VI 626; Dudok van Heel S.A.C., "Rembrandt: His Life, His Wife, the Nursemaid and the Servant", in Lloyd Williams J., *Rembrandt's Women* [exh. cat., National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh; Royal Academy of Arts, London] (Munich: 2001) 24–25.

89 Rembrandt, *Portrait of Hendrickje Stoffels*, ca. 1652–1656, London, National Gallery; Rembrandt, *Hendrickje in an Open Door*, ca. 1656, Berlin, Gemäldegalerie; Rembrandt, *Hendrickje Stoffels*, ca. 1655–1660, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Wetering, *Corpus* VI 614–616, 625, 626, discusses the several likenesses of Hendrickje. Compare Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* 327–331.

90 Rembrandt, *Venus and Cupid*, ca. 1657, Paris, Louvre. Wetering, *Corpus* VI 636–638. *Flora*, ca. 1654, New York, Metropolitan Museum, which like the 1641 *Saskia with a Flower* draws

painting does represent Hendrickje, which future cleaning and conservation might help to confirm or dispel, then it would be Rembrandt's most pointed statement of the power of love, embodied in the spouse as Venus, to inspire the painter.

Hendrickje has also been assumed to be the model for two histories dated 1654, the year that she was admonished, and presumably embarrassed, by the church authorities. In both, Rembrandt uses nudity, or partial nudity, to tell a story the fateful consequences of which hinge on the erotic desire provoked by the female body. The sitter in the portraits thought to be of Hendrickje bears clear resemblance to the model for *A Woman Bathing in a Stream*, 1654, a painting that, as Michael Zell has discussed, is remarkable for its suggestive, category-defying indeterminacy [Fig. 13.10].⁹¹ While this revealing, genre-like image of a woman hiking up her chemise to wade in a pool of water seems remarkably modern, the sumptuous clothes, on the bank behind her, suggest she is a mythological or Old Testament figure, possibly Susanna or Callisto, bathing in a moment of innocence before coming to realize that she is the object of male desire. To the initiated, her gaze into the water may also have evoked Narcissus. With her enactment of the Ur-painting, Narcissus's reflected image, Rembrandt enveloped his companion into his grand project of self-portrayal.⁹² Rembrandt also may have used Hendrickje as a model for *Bathsheba at Her Bath*—as King David spies upon her, while she reads the letter that he has sent her—although her facial features make this identification less certain, as does her full nudity.⁹³

Yet the notion that Hendrickje posed for at least one of Rembrandt's late nudes may date to his lifetime. *A Nude Woman Seated by a Hat* is listed as 'Rembrandts concubin' ten years after his death, in the 11 February 1679 inventory of the estate of Rembrandt's friend, the print collector/dealer Clement de Jonghe, whose portrait Rembrandt etched in 1651 [Fig. 13.13].⁹⁴ This print is one of six etchings of female nudes that Rembrandt made during the late 1650s

on Titian's *Flora*, has long been thought to represent Hendrickje. However, it is a less certain likeness.

- 91 Zell M., "Graphic Images: Rembrandt's Printed Nudes", in Noorman J. – Witt D. de, *Rembrandt's Naked Truth: Drawing Nude Models in the Golden Age* [exh. cat., Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam] (Zwolle: 2016) 98–99; Wetering, *Corpus* VI 619–620.
- 92 Mander, *Schilder-Boeck*, fol. 26 verso.
- 93 The possibility that Hendrickje served as the model for Rembrandt's *Bathsheba at Her Bath*, 1654, Paris, Louvre, is discussed by Alpers, *Rembrandt's Enterprise* 66–67, and from various perspectives in Adams A.J. (ed.), *Rembrandt's Bathsheba Reading King David's Letter* (Cambridge: 1998). This identification is rejected by Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* 327–331; Wetering, *Corpus* VI 624.
- 94 Hofstede de Groot, C., *Die Urkunden über Rembrandt (1575–1721)* (The Hague: 1906) 408.



FIGURE 13.10 *Rembrandt, A Woman Bathing in a Stream (Hendrickje Stoffels?) (1654). Oil on oak, 61.8 × 47 cm. London, National Gallery.*

PHOTO: © NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON / ART RESOURCE, NY.

and early 1660s, along with several drawings of models in the studio.⁹⁵ In part because this nude, like *Bathsheba*, is shown in profile, facial features do not provide a definitive answer as to whether some of these represent Hendrickje. However, Rembrandt's practice of repeatedly representing his familiars, whether in fanciful portraits or intimate sketches, lends support to the argument that he could have used Hendrickje as a model, either fully or partially nude. So, too, do Apelles and Rubens provide precedents for the loving muse as model. However, current scholars take a firm stance against this identification based, in part, on moral prohibitions against nudity. To be sure, documents suggest that, in Calvinist Amsterdam, posing in the nude would have been compromising for any woman, even a prostitute.⁹⁶ That representing nudes could also be compromising for artists is suggested by several references to Johannes Torrentius, whose paintings Von Sandrart, in 1675, dismissed as vulgar and who Theodor Schrevelius, in his 1648 history of Haarlem, described as 'infamous: he was a second Apelles, as he could paint nude women who presented themselves to him like whores'.⁹⁷ However, Torrentius's unique circumstances—in 1628 he was convicted as a blasphemer and atheist and his works were mostly destroyed—may account for the denunciation of his nudes (none of which remain). Other artists who specialized in nudes, above all Hendrick Goltzius, were not similarly criticized. More to the point, Rembrandt does not appear to have put much stock in social pressure.

These same scholars also argue that Rembrandt would not have put Hendrickje in the position of posing nude for a group of artists.⁹⁸ We know that Rembrandt at times conducted his studio like an informal academy, with life drawing at its center, using male models, starting in the 1640s, and female models in the 1650s. In 1646, he made a point of advertising that he was working from posed male models with three radically naturalistic etchings, *Nude Man Seated Before a Curtain*, *Nude Man Seated on the Ground*, and *Het Rolwagentje* (*A Nude Male Seated and Standing*), the last of which is a pictorial art theoretical statement about the foundational role of drawing from the

95 Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* 292–331; Bevers H. et al., *Drawings by Rembrandt and His Pupils: Telling the Difference* [exh. cat., J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles] (Los Angeles: 2009) 10–22, 236–249; Zell, "Graphic Images" 87–99; Noorman – Witt, *Rembrandt's Naked Truth* 143–155.

96 Manuth, "Stark naked" 50.

97 Schrevelius Theodor, *Harlemias, ofte, om beter te seggen, de eerste stichtinghe der stadt Haerlem* (Haarlem, Fonteyn: 1648) 445, quoted in Manuth, "Stark naked" 51.

98 Manuth, "Stark naked" 50.

model.⁹⁹ Several drawings of the identical posed figure by his pupils, including Samuel van Hoogstraten, who later regretted that he had not been taught to draw more graceful figures in his youth, affirm that the etchings record group-drawing sessions.¹⁰⁰ However, none of Rembrandt's etchings gives any indication that other artists were present, which is in stark contrast to the title illustration showing a male model surrounded by eleven young draftsmen and two drawing masters from Crispijn van de Passe's *Van 't Licht der Teken en Schilderkonst* (1643–1644). Similarly, several instances in which Rembrandt and his pupils appear to have represented the same posed female models, along with the drawing entitled *Rembrandt and His Pupils Drawing from a Nude Model* by Constantijn van Renesse, indicate that, by about 1650, Rembrandt held life drawing sessions with female models.¹⁰¹

Group-drawing sessions were not the only way to see, and draw from, the naked female body, especially for the (married) artist determined to learn how to draw the body naturalistically. Rembrandt's first biographer Arnold Houbraken, writing in 1718, tells an amusing anecdote about Rembrandt catching one of his pupils disrobing with his nude model. The young artist was heard to say that they were naked, like Adam and Eve, which led Rembrandt to drive them out of 'paradise'.¹⁰² This satirizing of Rembrandt's God-like authority over his studio reveals skepticism about his providing his students with individual working spaces—the partitions are documented—which is mocked precisely because it could have afforded the (improper) practice of drawing from models in private; it also suggests that the acknowledged sexual desire for the nude female model should not be acted upon, at least by subordinates. Recent scholars argue, not entirely convincingly, that Rembrandt did not draw from nude female models until about 1650.¹⁰³ Yet, it is hard to imagine that Rembrandt had not been drawing from nude, or semi-clothed, male and female models for much of his career, as that would have been expected from a history painter who wanted to represent convincingly the human figure.

99 Dickey S.S., "Judicious Negligence: Rembrandt Transforms an Emblematic convention", *Art Bulletin* 68 (1986) 253–262.

100 Hoogstraten, *Inleyding* 294; Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* 292–293; Bevers et al., *Drawings by Rembrandt and His Pupils* 10–22.

101 Constantijn van Renesse, *Rembrandt and His Pupils Drawing from a Nude Model*, ca. 1650, Darmstadt, Hessisches Landesmuseum.

102 Houbraken Arnold, *De Groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, Arnold Houbraken: 1718–21) I 257.

103 Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* 267–309; Kok, "Female Nude" 31; Noorman – Witt, *Naked Truth* 17–22.

Moreover Rembrandt's art suggests knowledge of real bodies. Beginning in the 1630s, as if rivaling Rubens (and then Titian), Rembrandt had promoted himself as a master of the nude. Rembrandt's early painted nudes, in *Andromeda*, *Diana Surprised by Actaeon*, *Susanna and the Elders*, and *Danaë*, however much they may rely on pictorial precedent, also look as if they were based on the study of real female bodies.¹⁰⁴ As Eric Jan Sluijter has argued, these histories, like the later *Bathsheba at Her Bath* and *Woman Bathing in a Stream*, thematize the dangerous consequences of the male gaze upon, and desire for, the naked female body.¹⁰⁵ Rembrandt's etchings (and drawings), however, tend to focus attention on the experience of posing nude, before the artist in the studio. With the infamous *Nude Woman Seated on a Mound*, circa 1631, Rembrandt dramatically remade the beautiful corporeality of Rubens's idealized nudes in his own relentlessly naturalistic manner, presumably using an ordinary woman as a model and representing her with all her dimples and folds of flesh [Fig. 13.11]. Whether or not his model posed fully nude, the etching seems to assert—through its heightened naturalism, through her assertive pose and direct gaze, as well as through the use of the print medium to disseminate it—that it was made in the presence of the live model. As Sluijter has argued, the print, which would have been shocking in its time, was a manifesto of Rembrandt's radical rejection of the classical ideal in favour of realism, or truth to observed and unembellished reality.¹⁰⁶

Rembrandt's unfinished etching *An Artist Drawing from a Nude Model*, circa 1639, another example of pictorial art theory, represents drawing from the nude in private, or extra-academy [Fig. 13.12]. In pointedly responding to a print of *Pygmalion*, by Pieter Feddes van Harlingen, Rembrandt created a witty 'dissimilar similarity': by representing himself as Apelles drawing the nude Venus, he transformed an exemplar of an ignoble type of love into an image of the painter inspired by eros.¹⁰⁷ In the Netherlands, Pygmalion embodied the artist motivated not by the noble love of art but by narcissistic

104 Rembrandt, *Andromeda*, ca. 1630–1631, The Hague, Mauritshuis; Rembrandt, *Diana Surprised by Actaeon*, 1634, Anholt, Museum Wasserburg Anholt; Rembrandt, *Susanna and the Elders*, 1636, The Hague, Mauritshuis; and Rembrandt, *Danaë*, 1636, St. Petersburg, Hermitage.

105 Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* 143–163; Zell, "Graphic Images" 91–92. See also Witt D. de, "Rembrandt's Moral Caution Concerning the Beautiful Female Nude", in Noorman J. – Witt D. de, *Rembrandt's Naked Truth: Drawing Nude Models in the Golden Age* [exh. cat., Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam] (Zwolle: 2016) 45–61.

106 Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* 271–278.

107 Chapman, *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits* 85–86. For Rembrandt's print as Apelles painting a personification of Victory, see Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* 282–283.



FIGURE 13.11 Rembrandt, *A Nude Woman Seated on a Mound* (1631). Etching, 17.7 cm × 16 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.
PHOTO: RIJKSMUSEUM.

self-love, a type of love that impeded the self-knowledge necessary for attaining true virtue. Van Mander writes of 'Pygmalions who blindly fall in love with their own works, and who are unwittingly lesser artists than they imagine and are ridiculed by those who understand art'.¹⁰⁸ Rembrandt's seated painter, in

108 Mander, *Schilder-boeck*, fol. 286 verso: 'Pygmalions, die op hun eyghen dinghen blindlijck verlieven, en onwetens dickwils verder te rugge zijn als zy meenen, en worden by den Const-verstandighen tot ghespot en belacchinghe, en voor geen cleen ghecken, maer wel de treflijckste ghehouden te wesen.' Cited in Chapman, *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits* 86, 159.



FIGURE 13.12 *Rembrandt, Artist Drawing from a Nude Model (ca. 1639). Etching, first state, 23.2 × 18.4 cm. London, British Museum.*

PHOTO: © TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

historicized clothing, is likely a self-portrait, to judge by his nose. His model's pose, seen from the back and with drapery over her arm, evokes the famous *Venus Callipyge*, 'Venus of the beautiful buttocks' or 'with the fair backside'.¹⁰⁹

109 Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* 281–285.

Multiple extant impressions of the slightly altered second state suggest that Rembrandt left the print unfinished intentionally, both to demonstrate that the initial sketch revealed the artist's true inventiveness and to convey that drawing (from the nude) was the basis of the art of painting. The print's lack of finish may also allude to Apelles's second Venus, the Venus of Cos, which would have outdone Venus *Callipyge* if it had ever been finished. After Apelles died, leaving it only partially finished, no one could be found who had the ability to complete it according to his preliminary sketches.¹¹⁰

A more expansive, less moralistic approach to Rembrandt's late nudes opens up the possibility that some of them may have been his loving representations of a familiar, and his way of evoking the love that impassions the artist. Just such a transgression of the moral code would have been in keeping with his increasing nonconformity. But it also may reflect a domesticating of the artist's model, as is suggested by a remarkable drawing from life of a model, half dressed, in Rembrandt's studio.¹¹¹ On the table in front of the model appears to be a small cradle, which suggests that this is Hendrickje with the new infant Cornelia.

If drawing from the nude was so improper, it is hard to imagine a prostitute being invited up to the studio in Rembrandt's house. Or maybe Rembrandt did bring in women of ill repute to pose for him and his colleagues. Or maybe Hendrickje, who occupied an indeterminate position between wife and whore, fulfilled that role. Two etchings of 1658, *A Nude Woman Seated by a Hat* and *A Half-Dressed Woman Seated by a Stove*, convey less Rembrandt's discomfort with nudity (as some have argued), and more his sympathy for the naked model. Too, they suggest that he wanted to bring out similarities between modeling and prostitution [Figs. 13.13 & 13.14].¹¹² Both prints represent the same woman, who does not look much like Hendrickje, and both reject the artifice of the academic modeling session while still evoking the artist's studio. In *Nude Woman Seated by a Hat*—the print called 'Rembrandt's concubine' in the 1679 inventory of Clement de Jonghe—rumpled white drapery, perhaps bedclothes, and the hat beside her, suggest a man who is not fully dressed and whose visit is only temporary.¹¹³ *Woman Seated by a Stove*, like *An Artist Drawing from a Nude Model* with its large fireplace at right, evokes what may have been a cliché about modeling in the studio, which is that the fire that warmed the

110 Pliny, *Natural History*, xxxv. 36.92. According to Van Mander, *Schilder-Boeck*, fols. 8o recto–8o verso, the Venus of Cos was left in the dead colouring state.

111 Rembrandt, *Rembrandt's Studio with a Model*, ca. 1654–1655, drawing, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.

112 Compare Witt, "Rembrandt's Moral Caution" 45–61.

113 Waals J. van der – Coelen P. van der, *Prenten in de Gouden Eeuw Van Kunst tot Kastpapier* [exh. cat., Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam] (Zwolle: 2006). 206–215.



FIGURE 13.13 Rembrandt, *A Nude Woman Seated by a Hat* (1658). Etching, 15.6 × 12.9 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.
PHOTO: RIJKSMUSEUM.

naked model warmed the artist as well. As Samuel van Hoogstraten would later put it, young painters flocked to ‘drawing schools or academies to draw *nae’t leven* male and female models by warm stoves’.¹¹⁴ But *Woman Seated by*

¹¹⁴ Hoogstraten, *Inleyding* 294, ‘En aen haer beveel ik u, ô Schilderjeugt, voornaementlijk wanneer gy nae de Teykenschoolen of Academien gaet, om mans-of vrouwe-naekten nae’t leven in de warme stooven te teykenen.’



FIGURE 13.14 *Rembrandt, A Half-Dressed Woman Seated by a Stove (1658). Etching, 22.8 × 18.7 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.*
 PHOTO: RIJKSMUSEUM.

a Stove simultaneously alludes to prostitution, for the oval relief on the stove shows Mary Magdalene, who had the reputation of being a prostitute or loose woman.¹¹⁵ Unlike the academy drawings of his contemporaries, which typically feature beautiful nudes in graceful poses and fully out of context, these

115 Sluijter, *Rembrandt and the Female Nude* 297.

at once show life in the studio and are embellished to convey, or inspire in the viewer, empathy for the model exposed in all her nakedness to the male gaze.¹¹⁶

Rembrandt almost always had to have a reason for making a nude; and his nudes are rarely fully exposed, as most are either partially draped or they conceal crucial parts of their bodies. In the *Reclining Nude* of 1658, Rembrandt shows the model presumably sleeping, heavily shaded, and only from the back. It as if he is hiding her from the gaze of the lecherous satyr who spies on her in *Jupiter and Antiope*, of the following year, which is the print that Clement de Jonghe described as 'Venus and satyr'. One of Rembrandt's very last etchings, the *Woman with an Arrow*, of 1661, is thought to be the print listed in the inventory as the '*naeckte Cleopatra*'.¹¹⁷ Yet the nude that we see from the back more strongly evokes Venus, holding the arrow she has stolen from Cupid, who looks up at her from the shadows [Fig. 13.15].¹¹⁸ She is at once a model in the studio—her arrow conceals the rope that helped the model hold her pose—and an updated, eroticized version of the classical Venus *Callipyge*. Drawing her from the back, Rembrandt does not have to confront her gaze, as is also the case with the *Reclining Nude*. Indeed, unlike the early assertive *Nude Woman Seated on a Mound*, all of Rembrandt's late nudes either avert their eyes or turn their heads away from the viewer. It is as if Rembrandt, in the most empathetic of ways, wants to preserve their dignity. He feels her nakedness, her exposure.

In contrast, *Het Pelsken* is all about love and all about Rubens, and his complete assimilation of the classical celebration of the beautiful nude body. Her attentiveness to him (and only him), her luscious body, her fertility are all in celebration of his art, a confirmation of his creative virility. Rembrandt's approach to the female nude is fundamentally different. For him, nakedness is about exposure, whether to King David, to the leering Elders, or to the artist, or group of artists, in the studio. His late nudes, whether or not they are Hendrickje, are more true to life; their pensive absorption draws him and us in, even when they are seen from the back. Rembrandt portrays her as a living, thinking being, even when she is Venus. Yet, through the nude Venus, Rubens and Rembrandt each likens himself to Apelles and claims to be motivated by love.

¹¹⁶ Zell, "Graphic Images" 87–99.

¹¹⁷ Waals – Coelen, *Prenten in de Gouden Eeuw* 206–15.

¹¹⁸ Stechow W., "Rembrandt's Woman with the Arrow", *Art Bulletin* 53 (1971) 487–492, identified the subject as Venus and Cupid. For other interpretations of the print, as Antony and Cleopatra, Candauros and Gyges, and Cupid and Psyche, see Zell "Graphic Images" 88, 96.



FIGURE 13.15 *Rembrandt, A Woman with an Arrow (1661). Etching and drypoint, 20.4 × 12.4 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.*
PHOTO: RIJKSMUSEUM.

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PART 6

*Youth, Friendship, and Other Inflections
of Divine Love*



The Dynamics of Divine Love: Francis de Sales's Picturing of the Biblical Mystery of the Visitation

Joseph F. Chorpenning

Francis de Sales (1567–1622), the early seventeenth-century French-speaking Savoyard Roman Catholic bishop of Geneva, resident in exile in Annecy, was the first candidate for beatification and canonization whose cause went through the rigorous and complex juridical process instituted after the Council of Trent (1545–1563). Although Francis's process had more than its share of challenges, less than forty years after his death, he was beatified in 1661. Four years later he was canonized a saint in 1665.¹ Who was this 'new Star in the Heaven of the Church,'² as Francis was acclaimed at his canonization [Fig. 14.1]?

During his lifetime and thereafter, Francis was renowned as the Apostle of the Chablais who reconverted this region from Calvinism to Catholicism, as a model pastoral bishop and one of Christendom's greatest preachers, as a best-selling author and much sought after spiritual director, and as the founder—together with St. Jane Frances de Chantal (1572–1641)—of one of the major new orders of the early modern Catholic reform, the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary. Yet another way that Francis was thought of was as the Doctor of Divine Love, which is foundational for all aspects of his life and pastoral ministry [Fig. 14.2].

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- 1 Challenges during the canonical procedure included documentation having to be redone to conform with evolving protocols, the dossier for Francis's cause being misplaced at the Congregation of Rites in Rome, and the danger of the devotion and affection of the people of Annecy for Francis compromising his cause since the new norms strictly prohibited a cult of sainthood developing before Rome had formally acted. For an overview of Francis's cause, see Boenzi J., *Saint Francis de Sales: Life & Spirit* (Stella Niagara, NY: 2013) 205–213.
- 2 This is the title of the unillustrated description, by the Jesuit emblemist and master of spectacle, Claude-François Ménestrier (1631–1705), of the celebration of Francis's canonization held in May 1666 at the First Monastery of the Visitation in Annecy: *Le Nouvel Astre du Ciel de l'Église* [...] *Saint François de Sales* (Grenoble, Robert Philippes: 1666).

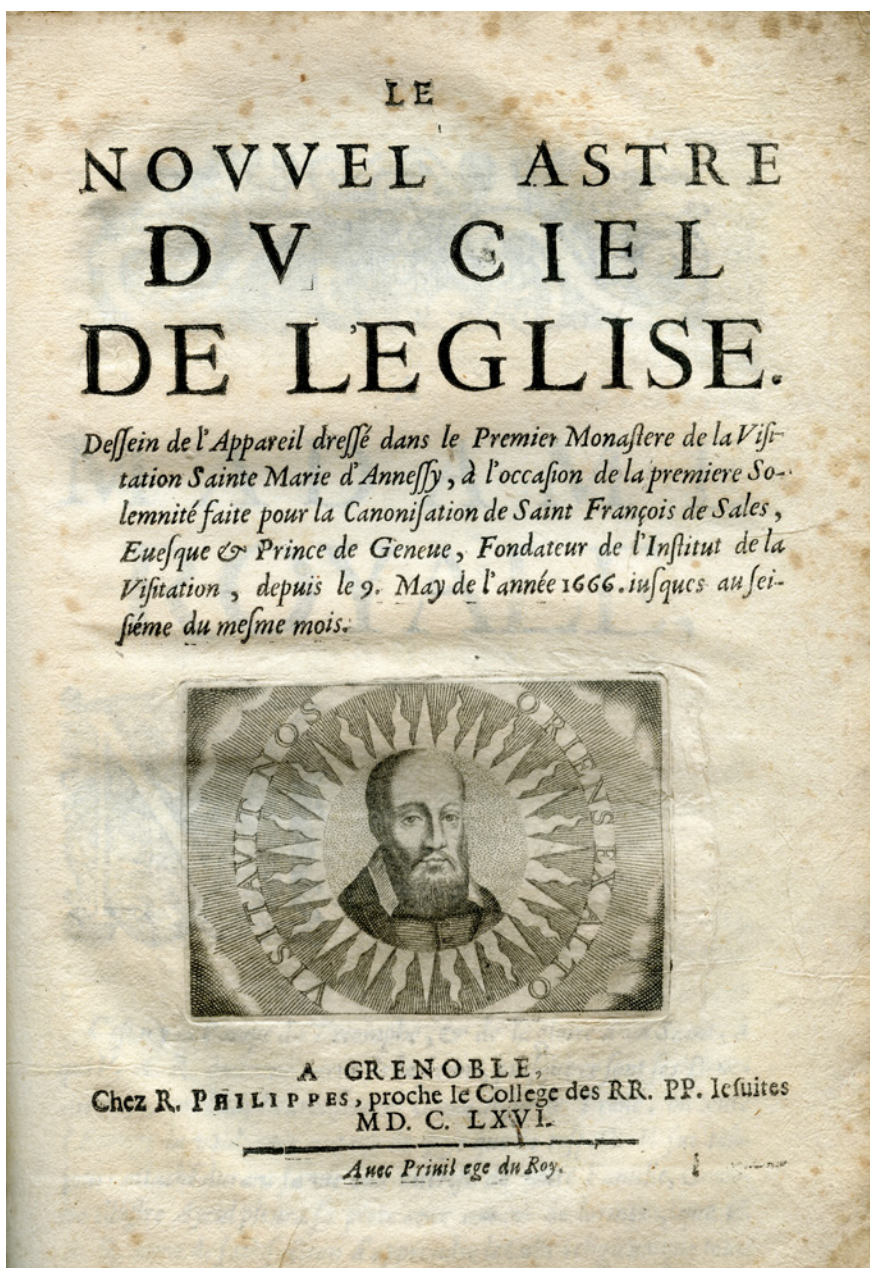


FIGURE 14.1 Title page, [Claude-François Ménestrier], *Le Nouvel Astre du Ciel de l'Eglise* [...] Saint François de Sales (Grenoble: Robert Philippes, 1666). Private collection.
PHOTO: TODD ROTHSTEIN.



FIGURE 14.2 Martin Baes, St. Francis de Sales, engraving in *A Treatise on the Love of God* [...] Translated into English by Miles Car, Priest of the English College of Douay. The Eighteenth Edition. (Douay: Gerard Pinchon, 1630). Salesian Library, Wilmington-Philadelphia Province, Oblates of St. Francis de Sales.

PHOTO: TODD ROTHSTEIN.

Francis was officially declared a Doctor of the Church in 1877. However, from at least the time of his beatification, he was accorded the moniker, Doctor of Divine Love. For example, the aim of the solemn celebration of Francis's beatification that took place in Annecy on 30 April 1662 was 'to set ablaze all the hearts of the city's inhabitants in the school of this incomparable Doctor of Divine Love'.³ Undoubtedly pivotal to the attribution of this accolade was Francis's masterwork, *Treatise on the Love of God* (1616), which is the saint's most thorough and comprehensive treatment of his understanding of the dynamics of divine love. In fact, upon the *Treatise's* publication, the Sorbonne and the Jesuits declared that this work placed its author among the ranks of the four great doctors of the Western Church—Augustine (354–430), Jerome (ca. 345–420), Ambrose (ca. 339–397), and Gregory the Great (ca. 540–604).⁴

For Francis, the dynamics of divine love are most clearly seen in the Biblical mystery of the Visitation—a perspective he disseminates principally through more popular media of communication such as his sermons and letter-writing. This paper explores Francis's picturing of the dynamics of divine love in the Visitation mystery by examining, first, the formative experience early in his life that shaped Francis's understanding of the dynamics of divine love; second,

3 Magistry Barthélémy, *Cérémonies et resjouissances faites en la ville d'Annessy sur la solennité de la béatification et l'élévation du corps sacré du bienheureux François de Sales, le 30. d'avril 1662* (Annecy, Pierre Delachinal: 1662) 21: 'embraser tous les cœurs de nos citoyens dans l'école de cet incomparable Docteur de l'Amour Divin' (quoted in Guiderdoni A., "Exegetical Immersion: The Festivities on the Occasion of Francis de Sales's Canonisation (1665–1667)", in Melion W.S., et al. (eds.), *Imago Exegetica: Visual Images as Exegetical Instruments, 1400–1700*, Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture 33 [Leiden – Boston: 2014] 855–884, esp. 876). Pope Alexander VII signed the brief of Francis's beatification on 28 December 1661, with the formal ceremony following in St. Peter's Basilica on 8 January 1662. The solemn celebration of Francis's beatification (including the exhumation of his body) took place in Annecy on 29–30 April 1662 and is chronicled in the aforementioned work of Barthélémy Magistry, a canon of St. Peter's cathedral in Annecy. See Oursel R. – Devos R., *L'Église Saint-François d'Annecy, Annesi, No. 10* (1963) 11–123, esp. 42–49. Modern papal documents often refer to Francis as Doctor of Divine Love: see, e.g., Bl. Pope Paul VI, *Sabaudiae gemma* [Gem of Savoy]: *Apostolic Letter Commemorating the 400th Anniversary of the Birth of St. Francis de Sales, Doctor of the Church*, trans. N. Kilty (Hyattsville, MD: 1967) 4, 8; and Pope St. John Paul II, "Letter on the Fourth Centenary of the Episcopal Ordination of St. Francis de Sales" (23 Nov. 2002) n. 3 (available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/letters/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20021209; accessed 14 Apr. 2016). Earlier John Paul referenced Francis as the 'Doctor of Love' in a homily given in Annecy, 7 Oct. 1986, during his apostolic pilgrimage to France (available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/fr/homilies/1986/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_198610; accessed 3 May 2016).

4 Hamon M., *Vie de Saint François de Sales*, 6th edition, 2 vols. (Paris – Lyon: 1875) II 180.

the principles informing Francis's picture-making; and, finally, the word-pictures that Francis composes of three moments in the Biblical mystery of the Visitation.

1 The Eros of God Revealed

The pivotal event setting Francis on the path to becoming the Doctor of Divine Love was his life-defining experience as a teenage student in Paris at the Jesuit Collège de Clermont (1578–1588). This experience had two key and interrelated components: one was Francis's profound spiritual crisis—the temptation to despair of his eternal salvation—precipitated by the religious turmoil in Paris, and the other, his initiation into the perspective, language, and imagery of the Old Testament *Song of Songs*.

Francis's biographers identify diverse sources for his spiritual crisis in Paris, including 'the student's overwork, a basic anxiety in his temperament, the influence of a passionate theological milieu'⁵ in which predestination was the hot-button topic of the day. Recent scholarship, however, has critiqued previous explanations for ignoring the Parisian historical context in which Francis found himself.⁶ During Francis's student days, Paris was caught up in what historians call the Wars of Religion, which involved not only Catholic on Huguenot violence, but also Catholic on Catholic violence. Within French Catholicism, there were militant Catholics who subscribed to an ethos of violence, religious anxiety, and rigorous penitential asceticism to assuage God's anger and avert divine punishment of France. Then there were moderate Catholics who favored a peaceful approach to Protestantism more in keeping with the Gospel.

5 Ravier A., *Francis de Sales: Sage and Saint*, trans. J. Bowler (San Francisco: 1988) 33.

6 See Donlan T., "The Reform of Zeal: François de Sales and Militant Catholicism during the French Wars of Religion" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Arizona, 2011). Although Francis's sovereign was the Duke of Savoy rather than the French king, nonetheless, Francis 'lived and studied in Paris for ten years (1578–1588), oversaw scores of parishes in the kingdom of France as a bishop, and established the majority of the Visitation convents in France' (42). Donlan maintains that Salesian scholarship's failure to contextualize Francis as 'operating within the matrix of *French Catholicism*' (ibid., author's emphasis) has led to neglect of his role as the architect of a divergent culture within the French Catholic world during the Wars of Religion: while part of Francis's ministry as a priest and bishop focused on Protestantism, an even greater portion was dedicated to reforming the French Wars of Religion's militant Catholicism.

Tensions reached new heights when Catholic militants resolved to eliminate both Protestants and moderate Catholics.⁷

Living, studying, and worshipping in the Latin Quarter, a citadel of militant Catholicism, Francis was immersed in militant Catholicism.⁸ His journal entries from the period reveal that he internalized militant Catholicism's notion of a vengeful, punishing God and 'began to fear God's judgment as many Catholic authorities advised'.⁹ The intractable divisions between militant and moderate Catholics, with their conflicting views of a wrathful and punitive God and of a loving and merciful God now played out within Francis. For six weeks (December 1586–January 1587), he battled a debilitating temptation: Francis believed that he was doomed to go to hell and had no hope of salvation. This cast him into a state of severe depression. As he later confided to Mother de Chantal, his 'state of extreme mental anguish [...] was so violent that he could hardly eat or sleep, and [he] went thin and as yellow as wax'.¹⁰

Relief came when Francis found himself able to pray, 'Whatever may happen, O Lord, [...] I will love You [...] at least in this life, if it is not given me to love You in eternal life'.¹¹ Definitive deliverance came when he recited St. Bernard of Clairvaux's prayer to Our Lady, the *Memorare*. Francis later wrote that 'he heard a voice within him testifying that the temptation had been to "the glorification of my name, which is not He-who-damns [*damnificator*], but Jesus",¹² He-who-saves. From that time on, 'central to [Francis's] understanding of God was the universal, emphatic call of God to all human beings and in every form of human life to that charity which was friendship and salvation'.¹³ By his insistence on the universal salvific will of God (cf. 1 *Timothy* 2:4), Francis

7 Ibid. 11, 45, 71–72.

8 Ibid. 68, 78.

9 Ibid. 74.

10 "Déposition pour la canonisation de Saint François de Sales", in *Sainte Jeanne-Françoise Frémyot de Chantal: Sa vie et ses œuvres*, 8 vols. (Paris: 1876–1879) III 93–246, esp. 101: 'extrêmes angoisses d'esprit [...] avec telle violence, qu'il perdit quasi tout le manger et le dormir, et devint tout maigre et jaune comme de cire'. English trans.: *St. Francis de Sales: A Testimony by St. Chantal*, ed. – trans. E. Stopp (Hyattsville, MD: 1967) 44–45.

11 *Œuvres de saint François de Sales, Édition complète*, 27 vols. (Annecy: 1892–1964) XXII 19–20 (hereafter Annecy edition): 'Quoi qu'il arrive, Seigneur, [...] je vous aimerai [...] au moins en cette vie, s'il ne m'est pas donné de vous aimer dans la vie éternelle'.

12 McGinn B., *The Doctors of the Church: Thirty-Three Men and Women Who Shaped Christianity* (New York: 1999) 161. Cf. Annecy edition XXII 66.

13 Buckley M., "Seventeenth-Century French Spirituality: Three Figures", in Dupré L. – Saliers D.E. (eds.), *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern*, World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest 18 (New York: 1989) 28–68, esp. 34–35.

parted company with the prevailing theology of his time that embraced 'the horror of a theology of predestination that would arbitrarily save some and equally arbitrarily damn others'.¹⁴

The second of the two integral elements of the defining experience of Francis's life played a key role in the Parisian crisis, as well as provided Francis the necessary resources—vocabulary and imagery—to articulate the Salesian understanding of God as He-who-saves, rather than He-who-damns. Francis's father had sent his eldest son to Paris to be educated by the Jesuits in preparation for Francis subsequently pursuing a doctorate in civil and canon law at the University of Padua. While his father foresaw a career in public service for Francis, the future saint harbored a vocation to the priesthood. And so in addition to his classes in humanities and philosophy at Clermont, Francis also attended lectures in theology at the Sorbonne. In 1584 Francis followed the series of lectures on the *Song of Songs* given by the erudite Benedictine exegete, Gilbert Générard (1537–1597), who was professor of Hebrew at the Royal College at the University of Paris.

Among the shortest books of the Bible (117 verses), the *Song of Songs* is a central text in Western Christianity from the patristic period through the early modern era. The *Song's* early commentators—Origen (ca. 185–ca. 254), Gregory the Great, and Bernard of Clairvaux (ca. 1090–1153)—and its importance in the Middle Ages, when 'Christian interpreters wrote more works on the *Song of Songs* than on any other individual book of the Old Testament',¹⁵ are well known.¹⁶ More recent scholarship demonstrates that in early Latin Christianity, Church Fathers such as Cyprian (ca. 200–258), Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine 'used the [*Song*] to illuminate complex problems of identity posed by differences in liturgical practice, doctrinal definition, and attitudes towards the body and sexuality [...] as a tool in the service of self-definition, which was later bequeathed to the theologians of medieval Europe'.¹⁷

During the Renaissance, the *Song's* popularity and influence became even greater and more widespread. With the advent of printing, older commentaries

14 Ibid. 35. While predestination is usually associated with Calvinism, it was also prevalent in Catholic theology of the day (ibid.).

15 Murphy R.E., *The Song of Songs: A Commentary on the Book of Canticles or The Song of Songs*, ed. S.D. McBride, Jr., Hermeneia – A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: 1990) 21.

16 See, e.g., Matter E. Ann., *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia: 1990); and Astell A., *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: 1990).

17 Shuve K., *The Song of Songs and the Fashioning of Identity in Early Latin Christianity*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (New York: 2016) 4.

on the *Song* become best-sellers, while new perspectives on Scripture and the Church are a catalyst for an astonishing number of new commentaries, eclipsing those on texts more central to Reformation concerns such as the *Fourth Gospel*, *Romans*, or *Hebrews*. From about the mid-fifteenth century until 1600, 107 editions of the *Song* and 570 commentaries on this book are published, with another two dozen commentaries circulating in manuscript.¹⁸ Visual images inspired by the *Song* were produced by both Catholic and Protestant illustrators, and borrowings from the *Song*'s verbal imagery were ubiquitous in music, liturgy, prayer, sermons, devotional literature, and even political and literary writing.¹⁹ In the next century, the *Song* is 'the central book of Seicento devotion'.²⁰ As Robert Kendrick writes, 'For women and men in and out of the Catholic world, this short Old Testament canticle provided a wide array of allegorical tropes for earthly phenomena, ranging from the entirety of soteriological history, to the provision of models for daily Christian life, to comfort in the often difficult personal search for Christ. It would be difficult to overestimate the meaning of this stunningly beautiful text, with its exotic poetic language and mysteriously discontinuous narrative, for the self-understanding and mystical world-view of everyday women and men in the seventeenth century'.²¹

Génébrard was part and parcel of the wave of the *Song*'s enormous popularity during the early modern period, as indeed was Francis de Sales. The Benedictine exegete had a long-standing interest in the *Song*, having published an edition of Origen's homilies and commentary on the *Song* early in his ca-

18 See Engammare M., *Qu'il Me Baise des Baisers de sa Bouche: Le Cantique des Cantiques à la Renaissance. Étude et bibliographie* (Geneva: 1993) *21–*148.

19 Engammare, *Qu'il Me Baise des Baisers de sa Bouche* 373–481. The *Song*'s dialogic possibilities were often explored in sacred music by polyphonic settings of verses from this text. Notably, not long after the publication of one such motet, Francis reports on the singing that he heard at an unnamed female monastery in Milan in April 1613, citing the verse sung, *Song* 2:14, 'Let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely', as a proof text for divine praise: see Saint François de Sales, *Œuvres*, ed. A. Ravier – R. Devos, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: 1969) 597 (*Treatise*, Book 5, chap. 11) (hereafter *Œuvres*); and Kendrick R., *Celestial Sirens: Nuns and Their Music in Early Modern Milan* (Oxford: 1996) 245, note 65. As is well known, the *Song* was accorded a privileged status by the great mystics. For an important recent study of this phenomenon, see McGinn B., "One Word Will Contain Within Itself a Thousand Mysteries": Teresa of Ávila, the First Woman Commentator on the Song of Songs", *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 16 (2016) 21–40.

20 Kendrick, *Celestial Sirens* 166–167.

21 Ibid. 167. Also see Kendrick R., "Sonet vox tua in auribus meis: Song of Songs Exegesis and the Seventeenth-Century Motet", *Schütz-Jahrbuch* 16 (1994) 99–118.

reer (Paris: 1574). Five years later, G  n  brard published his own commentary, *Observationes in Canticum Canticorum* (Paris: 1579), which pays close attention to the Hebrew text as well as to the work of medieval Jewish commentators, and strongly affirms the ecclesial interpretation of the *Song* as an allegory of the love between Christ and the Church. A second edition of G  n  brard's commentary appeared in 1585 that included a critique of the Calvinist theologian and poet Theodore Beza's Latin translation of the *Song* (Paris: 1584) that faulted it on several counts: its poetic license, ignorance of Hebrew, and being more akin to the profane style of Horace and Virgil than the sacred style of the Hebrew Bible.²² It is likely that in his 1584 lectures on the *Song*, G  n  brard previewed his critique of Beza. Among his students was the seventeen-year-old Francis. Decades later, Francis appreciatively recalls G  n  brard 'with honor and consolation for having been his student, though a poor one, when he was royal reader at Paris and lectured on the *Song of Songs*'.²³ Yet the student's renown as a commentator on the *Song* would surpass the teacher's.

The product of rigorous scholarship, G  n  brard's lectures on the *Song* 'gave to the [Biblical poem] a boldly mystical interpretation', which 'was a revelation for Francis', who henceforth 'was no longer able to conceive of the spiritual life except as a love story, the most beautiful of love stories'.²⁴ Decades later, Francis succinctly and eloquently formulates his understanding of the *Song*'s mystical interpretation, to which he was first introduced by G  n  brard, thusly: 'Solomon describes in a wonderfully pleasing manner the love between the Savior and the devout soul in that divine work that for its excellent gracefulness is called the *Song of Songs*. And to gently elevate our minds to consideration of this spiritual love between ourselves and God, [...] he employs an extended representation of the love between a chaste shepherd and modest shepherdess'.²⁵

22 Murphy, *The Song of Songs* 36. Also see Engammare M., "Licence po  tique versus m  trique sacr  e: La pol  mique entre B  ze et G  n  brard au sujet des Psaumes et du Cantique des Cantiques (1579–1586), Premi  re partie", in Backus I. (ed.), *Th  odore de B  ze (1519–1605)*, Actes du Colloque de Gen  ve (septembre 2005) publi  s par l'Institut d'histoire de la R  formation (Geneva: 2007) 479–499; and idem, "Licence po  tique versus m  trique sacr  e (II): La pol  mique entre B  ze et G  n  brard au sujet de la paraphrase latine du Cantique des Cantiques (1584–1586)", *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 1 (2009) 102–125.

23 *Œuvres* 908 (*Treatise*, Book 11, chap. 11): 'par honneur et avec consolation pour avoir   t   son disciple, quoique inutilement, lorsqu'il   tait lecteur royal    Paris et qu'il exposait le Cantique des Cantiques'.

24 Ravier, *Francis de Sales* 31.

25 *Œuvres* 376 (*Treatise*, Book 1, chap. 9): 'Salomon d  crit d'un air d  licieusement admirable les amours du Sauveur et de l'  me d  vote, en ce divin ouvrage que pour son excellente

While it has some narrative development, the *Song* does not proceed in a linear fashion and has no plot. Instead, it meanders, surging forward and repeating itself, returning to themes and images and playing variations upon them that establish echoes across the time and space of the poem. The *Song* begins *in medias res*, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth' (1:2), thus drawing the reader into the romantic relationship already in progress, while creating the impression that the action takes place in the present and unfolds before the reader, who overhears and observes the lovers. Key to this illusion of immediacy is the dialogue format offering both the female and male point of view, as well as poetic techniques, such as the imperative 'look!' and the use of participles, to capture action in progress.²⁶

While the *Song's* concern is with love in the concrete rather than the abstract, it is not about specific lovers, but all lovers, thus lending the poem to the multiple interpretations that it has been given throughout history—the God of Israel and the Chosen People, Christ and the Church, and God and the human heart. The *Song* immortalizes love by representing it as ever in progress and by resisting closure: the poem ends with the woman seeming to send her lover away (8:14) so that it may begin anew with longing and the quest to gratify desire, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!' Beginning *in medias res* and ending without closure makes the *Song* a poem without beginning or end. Like the love it celebrates, the *Song* is never-ending, 'for love is strong as death' (8:6).²⁷

Génébrard's lectures on the *Song* reveal to Francis the *eros* of God, who is passionately in love with humankind: the divine heart is open, vulnerable, wounded by love for humanity, and seeks communion with the human heart (cf. *Song* 4:9).²⁸ The *eros* of divine love finds its fulfillment in *agape*, Christ's free self-gift, even to death on a cross, thus redeeming *eros* from self-seeking (*cupiditas*).²⁹ This passionate, relational God could not be more different from the forbidding, distant, punitive God that Francis encounters in militant Catholic sermons in the French Quarter. In the spiritual crisis of 1586–1587, the former finally prevails: He-who-saves, not He-who-damns. From the short bib-

suavité on appelle le Cantique des Cantiques. Et pour nous élever plus doucement à la considération de cet amour spirituel qui s'exerce entre Dieu et nous [...], il emploie une perpétuelle représentation des amours d'un chaste berger et d'une pudique bergère'.

26 Exum J.C., "Song of Songs", in Hass A. et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of English Literature and Theology* (2007; New York: 2011) 259–273, esp. 259–260, 262, 264; and idem, *Song of Songs: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville: 2005) 3–5, 14.

27 Exum, "Song of Songs" 261–62, 271–72; and idem, *Song of Songs: A Commentary* 4, 8, 11–13.

28 McDonnell E., *God Desires You: St. Francis de Sales on Living the Gospel* (Dublin: 2001) 30.

29 This theme enters Roman Catholic magisterial teaching in Pope Benedict XIV's encyclical letter, *God Is Love / Deus Est Caritas* (San Francisco: 2006) nn. 9–10.

lical poem, 'the impressionable teenager discovered the true nature of God's eternal, searching, and very personal love for each of us, even by name. [...] From Scripture he already knew that God is love (1 *John* 4:8). From the *Song of Songs* he now learned that love is essentially a relationship'.³⁰

The episode of the *Song* that aligns with Francis's experience at this moment in his young life is when the bride and the spouse somehow become separated and search longingly for one another (3:1–4). 'The path of love is marked with difficulties, loneliness, and blind alleys'.³¹ When at last they find each other, they joyously embrace, exclaiming, 'I have hold of you and I will never let you go!' (3:4)—in the Vulgate, 'Tenui nec dimittam', which Francis adopts as his motto.³² Francis had taken hold of He-who-saves, and he would never let go. Francis's understanding of God and human salvation was forged in the crucible of the suffering of the crisis of Paris, and henceforth his 'theology [...] is only intelligible in the context of' this 'single experience that lies at the basis of Francis's life'; 'his subsequent theology is both explanation and expansion' of it.³³

In the Salesian *œuvre*, the *Song* is quoted or referenced more often than any other book of the Bible (more than 700 times), and Francis consistently appeals to the *Song's* words, images, and expressions whenever he writes or speaks about the dynamics of divine love.³⁴ In 1602–1604, Francis wrote a *Mystical Exposition of the Song of Songs*, in which he 'attempted a more systematic, "allegorical" reading of the *Song* as a narrative of one's progress in prayer'.³⁵

30 Fiorelli L., *Inspired Common Sense: Seven Fundamental Themes of Salesian Spirituality* (Stella Niagara, NY: 2012) 13–14.

31 Reese J.M., *The Book of Wisdom, Song of Songs*, Old Testament Message 20 (Wilmington, DE: 1983) 224.

32 Brix A., *St. Francis de Sales and the Canticle of Canticles*, trans. T. Dailey (Bangalore: 1989) 5; and Dailey T., "A Song of Prayer: Reading the Canticle of Canticles with St. Francis de Sales", *Studia Mystica* 15, 4 (1992) 65–82, esp. 73.

33 Buckley, "Seventeenth-Century French Spirituality" 33–34.

34 Koster D., *Francis de Sales* (Noorden: 2000) 26. Also see Mc Donnell, *God Desires You* 28, 30, 34, 39, 46, etc.; and Fedrigotti L., "St. Francis de Sales, 'Doctor of Divine Love and Evangelical Gentleness'", *Theology Annual* 31 (2010) 121–182, esp. 125–167 ("Saint Francis de Sales's Doctrine of Divine Love according to His Understanding of the Canticle of Canticles in His *Treatise on the Love of God* [the *Theotimus*]").

35 Ceresko A., "The Interpretation of the Song of Songs in St. Francis de Sales: How a Saint Learned 'the Lessons of Love,'" *Salesianum* 66 (2004) 31–50, esp. 44; reprinted in idem, *St. Francis de Sales and the Bible* (Bangalore: 2005) 152–181. On Francis's *Mystical Exposition*, see Brix, *St. Francis de Sales and the Canticle of Canticles*; and Dailey, "A Song of Prayer".

The *Treatise*, which is permeated by the *Song*'s language and imagery,³⁶ may have been 'originally envisioned as a "commentary" on the [*Song*]',³⁷ and has been characterized as a 'running commentary' on this text.³⁸ In the *Treatise*, Francis so takes 'possession of the text of the *Song* that its words and images mingle easily with his own'.³⁹ It is no accident that in proclaiming Francis a Doctor of the Church, Bl. Pope Pius IX (reigned 1846–1878) singles out his achievement as an interpreter of the *Song*: 'in [Francis's] interpretation of the *Canticle of Canticles*, many scriptural mysteries concerning moral and spiritual questions were solved; many problems were explained, and many obscure points were exposed to new light [...] so that he might [...] make them understandable for both the learned and the unlearned'.⁴⁰

Francis's constant recourse to the *Song* and the consequent ubiquity of its words, images, and expressions in his writings and sermons is one of the hallmarks of Salesian thought. Another is 'visual acuity'—a term that has recently entered early modern studies as shorthand for the 'keen awareness of the power of visualization' on the part of artists, writers, preachers, musicians, and performers, among others, who 'often used visual images or conjured mental images to connect with their audiences'.⁴¹ Before turning to how Francis pictures the dynamics of divine love in the Biblical mystery of the Visitation, it would be helpful to consider briefly some principles informing Salesian picture-making.

2 Salesian Picture-making

The principal witness at the canonical process for Francis's beatification, Mother de Chantal, testifies: 'What people most admired in his preaching was his very easy and clear way of expressing his meaning, and the fact

36 See, e.g., Ryan J., "Translator's Introduction", in St. Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, 2 vols. (Garden City: 1963) I 15–32, esp. 22; and Fedrigotti 121–182. According to Ryan's reckoning, of the *Song*'s 106 verses, Francis quotes sixty-three in the *Treatise*, some of them frequently so that they total 179 references.

37 Brix, *St. Francis de Sales and the Canticle of Canticles* 13.

38 Fedrigotti, "St. Francis de Sales, 'Doctor of Divine Love and Evangelical Gentleness'" 126.

39 Ceresko, "The Interpretation of the Song of Songs in St. Francis de Sales" 44.

40 "Decree of Pope Pius IX, *Dives in Misericordia Deus*, 16 November 1877: Apostolic Letter Proclaiming St. Francis de Sales a Doctor of the Church", trans. D. Gambet, in Fiorelli L., *Leadership in the Salesian Tradition* (Stella Niagara, NY: 2008) 30–36, esp. 33.

41 Smith J.C., "Introduction", in idem (ed.), *Visual Acuity and the Arts of Communication in Early Modern Germany*, Visual Culture in Early Modernity (Burlington, VT: 2014) 1–19, at 1.

that he gave simple and solid explanations of the most abstruse mysteries of our holy faith'.⁴² Francis's visual acuity undoubtedly plays a significant role in this process in both his sermons and writings, for he frequently employs word-pictures or visual representations to present and explain the mysteries of faith so that 'everyone had something concrete to remember'.⁴³ At every turn in his sermons and writings, Francis invites his reader/listener to see, look, picture with the mind's eye or in the imagination.⁴⁴ This has prompted scholars to suggest that the poetical-rhetorical style of Francis's sermons and writings corresponds to panegyric or epideictic, what the Latin authors called *ars laudandi*, which was regarded as most apt for sacred oratory in early modern Catholicism.⁴⁵ Epideictic sought to win assent rather than to impose it by bringing before the reader's/listener's eyes the great mysteries of salvation and the lives of the saints for admiration and contemplation. Of prime importance in epideictic, then, is seeing, and thus painting a word-picture. In the words of

42 "Déposition pour la canonisation de Saint François de Sales" 181: '[I]l était particulièrement admiré en la grande facilité et clarté qu'il avait à s'exprimer et à donner une naïve et solide intelligence aux mystères plus difficiles de notre sainte foi'. English trans.: *St. Francis de Sales: A Testimony* by St. Chantal 104.

43 "Déposition pour la canonisation de Saint François de Sales" 180: 'chacun les pouvait emporter'. English trans.: *Francis de Sales: A Testimony* by St. Chantal 103.

44 Legros P., *François de Sales: Une poétique de l'imaginaire. Étude des représentations visuelles dans "l'Introduction à la vie dévote" et le "Traité de l'amour de Dieu"*, Biblio 17–151 (Tübingen: 2004) 13. For further discussion of Francis's 'visual acuity', see Chorpenning J., "Lectio divina and Francis de Sales's Picturing of the Interconnection of Divine and Human Hearts", in Melion et al. (eds.), *Imago Exegetica*, esp. 449–453, 460–473; for bibliography, see 451, note 3. Legros suggests that Francis's visual representations take two principal forms: the similitude and ekphrasis (*François de Sales: Une poétique de l'imaginaire* 17, 245). According to Francis, similitudes consist in 'ordinary things' being 'carefully applied, as our Lord does in the parable of the seed [*Matthew* 13:3–23]' (Annecy edition XII 314: 'choses triviales [...] subtilement appliquees, [...] comme Nostre Seigneur fait en la parabole de la semence') to explain a particular point that the preacher/author strives to make intelligible to his audience/reader. Ekphrasis is 'the literary representation of visual art' (Rosand D., "Ekphrasis and the Generation of Images", *Arion* 1, 1 [Winter 1990] 61–105, esp. 61), real or fictive, which is so vivid that it brings about 'seeing through hearing' (Baxandall M., *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition 1350–1450* [Oxford, 1971] 85).

45 See, e.g., O'Reilly T., "The Mystical Theology of Saint Francis de Sales in the *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*", in Nelstrop L. – Onishi B. (eds.), *Mysticism in the French Tradition: Eruptions from France* (Burlington, VT: 2015) 207–220, esp. 216–218; and Chorpenning J., "Ars laudandi, Francis de Sales's Picture of St. Joseph's Sanctification, and Its Emblematic Adaptation by Adrien Gambart", *Emblematica: Essays in Word and Image*, Vol. 1 (2017) 141–189.

John O'Malley, the 'epideictic preacher [or writer] consistently invites his [...] audience [...] to "look", to "view", to "gaze upon", and to "contemplate". [...] The frequency and consistency with which these verbs are repeated are striking'.⁴⁶

As already noted, during his student days in Paris, Francis frequented, and was profoundly affected by, the apocalyptic and incendiary sermons of militant Catholic preachers. However, 'from his Jesuit teachers in those years he would have received other messages, other instructions, and been given other models to follow. The Jesuits would have given him a thorough training in classical languages, literature, oratory, and eloquence; as for pulpit oratory, it is very likely that panegyric of the saints played a major role in the Jesuit preaching he heard'.⁴⁷ Besides the panegyric-epideictic style, Francis was also introduced to the imaginative world of St. Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, which had a lifelong influence on him.⁴⁸ Ignatius himself 'did not have a speculative mind: he was not at home with abstract thought and had little gift for it. His mind worked far more easily with the concrete, with stories, pictures and images. When he presents the Christian mysteries and truths in the *Exercises*, for example, he does so mainly by means of stories and pictures. [...] His presentation of the central mystery of the Incarnation, for instance, which has often been the subject of highly abstract, speculative thought among theologians, takes the very effective form of a series of pictures, scenes which form a story'.⁴⁹

In his own ministry as a priest and bishop, Francis, like Ignatius, realized that the most effective way to present Christian mysteries was not by abstract, speculative theological explanations, but by pictures and stories. The *Exercises*'s emphasis on the development of the imagination was complemented by Francis's study of rhetoric at Clermont, specifically the Roman orator Quintilian (30?–96? AD), who insisted on the primacy of picture-making in writing and speaking.⁵⁰ Quintilian's book, *The Orator's Education*, was a favorite among Jesuit educators; it was also one of the most cited and popular

46 O'Malley J., *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome: Rhetoric, Doctrine, and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c. 1450–1521*, Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies 3 (Durham, NC: 1979) 63.

47 Worcester T., "St. Francis de Sales and Jesuit Rhetorical Education", in Gannett C. – Brereton J. (eds.), *Traditions of Eloquence: The Jesuits and Modern Rhetorical Studies* (New York: 2016) 102–115, esp. 103.

48 See, e.g., Worcester, "St. Francis de Sales and Jesuit Rhetorical Education" 104.

49 Lonsdale D., *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear: An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality*, Traditions of Christian Spirituality Series (Maryknoll, NY: 2000) 111.

50 See Stopp E., "St. Francis de Sales at Clermont College: A Jesuit Education in Sixteenth-Century Paris", in idem, *A Man to Heal Differences: Essays and Talks on St. Francis de Sales* (Philadelphia: 1997) 23–50, esp. 27–30 (originally published in *Salesian Studies* 6,1 [Winter 1969] 42–63).

rhetorical and educational manuals in early modern Europe. 'Quintilian [...] identified the visual vividness of speech [*enargeia*] with the "ability to put a subject before one reader's eyes", which for him was "the highest of all oratorical gifts" and could be achieved through a careful attention and precision of a writer's descriptions. Through his careful depictions, the orator could and should "stir up his hearer by making him envision the unseen and build a coherent picture from the accumulation of specific details".⁵¹

As a writer and speaker, Francis assimilated the tradition of imaginative meditative prayer popularized by the *Exercises*, as well as by the fourteenth-century *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, which Francis would have known as the work of St. Bonaventure (ca. 1221–1274),⁵² together with Quintilian's ideal of visual language and the primacy accorded by panegyric-epideictic to seeing and painting a word-picture. Throughout his writings and sermons, Francis crafts vivid, sensuous, lifelike, and memorable word-pictures so that the listener/reader 'sees' in the mind's eye what is heard or read.⁵³ These mental images were to be stored in the memory for future retrieval for meditative prayer and spiritual exercises—a practice popularized by the Ignatian *Exercises*, but whose roots can be traced to the patristic period and monasticism.⁵⁴ The primary audience for Francis's picturing of the Biblical mystery of the

51 Laguna A.M., *Cervantes and the Pictorial Imagination: A Study on the Power of Images and Images of Power in Works by Cervantes* (Lewisburg, PA: 2009) 30.

52 When Francis recommends Bonaventure to Philothea for devotional reading in the *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Part 2, chap. 17, it is likely that he has the *Meditations* in mind. Although attributed to Bonaventure until the eighteenth century, the *Meditations* is now regarded as the work of the fourteenth-century Tuscan Franciscan friar John of Caulibus: see, e.g., "Introduction" to John of Caulibus, *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, trans. – ed. F.X. Taney, Sr. – A. Miller, O.S.F. – C. Mary Stallings-Taney (Asheville, NC: 1999) xiii–xxx, esp. xiii–xxiv. In the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century, there was a strong resurgence of interest in Franciscan spirituality, specifically Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) and Bonaventure (who was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1588 and whose works were printed or reprinted between 1593 and 1609): see, e.g., Askew P., "The Angelic Consolation of St. Francis of Assisi in Post-Tridentine Italian Painting", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 (1969) 280–306; and Treffers B., "Il Francesco Hartford del Caravaggio e la spiritualità francescana alla fine del XVI. sec.", *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorisches Institutes in Florenz* 32 (1988) 145–171.

53 See, e.g., Eck C. van, *Classical Rhetoric and the Visual Arts in Early Modern Europe* (New York: 2007) 7; and, on *enargeia* as 'painting in the mind', Carruthers M., *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (New York: 1998) 130–133.

54 As Carruthers explains, "The monastic practice of meditation notably involved making mental images or cognitive "pictures" (*The Craft of Thought* 3), which was pivotal to the 'craft of making prayer continuously, which is the craft of monasticism' (ibid. 2).

Visitation was the nascent Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary. Its membership would likely have been well 'practised in spiritual exercises that demanded a high level of visualization of [...] the central episodes of the lives of Christ and Mary'.⁵⁵

In this connection, Francis's sermons also highlight the interplay and complementarity of the oral-aural and visual. Speech was not simply oral, because the creation of vivid word-pictures brought about 'seeing through hearing'.⁵⁶ For the early modern mind, there was a symbiotic relationship between sight and sound, seeing and hearing.⁵⁷ The Ignatian *Exercises*, for example, is 'not a book to be read':⁵⁸ the person 'undertaking the *Exercises* [...] must do so aurally, guided by [an] experienced master [...], whose deployment of rhetorical imagery should aim to surprise (unbalance?) the ear and the imagination. The analogy with preaching is clear, though the frame is now changed from private to public'.⁵⁹

Early modern Catholic rhetoric ascribed great importance to 'oral delivery (both structural and sonic) of the spiritual message, whether in public preaching or in private exercise [...] and its reception by the listener'.⁶⁰ With regard to the latter, it 'emphasized the importance of "active receptivity" to stimuli that could trigger transcendent connection to the divine. While the sense of sight was an essential resource for the "active recipient", it was not the most uniformly privileged conduit, and the sense of hearing (in some cases, [...]) evoked by the sense of sight) was at least as crucial—perhaps in many cases even more so'.⁶¹

Francis fully avails himself of the synergy of the oral-aural and visual to help his readers/ listeners to 'see' the divine love story that unfolds in the Biblical mystery of the Visitation. It has been observed that the Visitation 'is a mystery set between the Annunciation and the birth of Christ like a shining jewel'.⁶² However, it took the Church many centuries to discover this 'shining jewel',

55 Baxandall M., *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (New York: 1988) 45.

56 Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators* 85.

57 Woolf D., "Speech, Text, and Time: The Sense of Hearing and the Sense of the Past in Renaissance England", *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 18, 2 (Summer 1986) 159–193, esp. 190.

58 Endean P., "The *Spiritual Exercises*," in Worcester T. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits* (New York: 2008) 52–67, esp. 53.

59 Dell'Antonio A., *Listening as Spiritual Practice in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: 2011) 31–32.

60 Ibid. 32.

61 Ibid. 33.

62 Obbard E.R., *A Year with Mary: Prayers and Readings for Marian Feasts and Festivals* (Mystic, CT: 1998) 104.

for the feast of the Visitation is not inserted into the Roman Calendar until 1568, the year after Francis's birth.⁶³ Coming to be 'completely taken with [the] beloved [mystery of the] Visitation, in which our Savior, like a wholly new wine, makes [His] loving affection gush forth within the womb of His sacred Mother',⁶⁴ Francis is in the forefront of the ecclesial appreciation of this richest of mysteries. In Francis's view, the Visitation 'summed up all the Christian mysteries, and as such it was first and foremost a mystery that expressed the dynamics of love. As divine love is ecstatic and communicative, [...] the divine action in the world might be seen as a lover's visitation. [...] Indeed, the mystery of the Incarnation, captured in the biblical scene of the Annunciation, was seen as God's "kiss" to humanity, God's loving union with humankind through Mary, the spouse and lover. By this kiss creation is inspirited and the world transformed. Having been visited and prompted, Mary in her turn recapitulates this loving dynamic: she hastens to the hill country and the house of her cousin Elizabeth'.⁶⁵

Francis shares his insights into the mystery of the Visitation with the nascent Visitation Order over the period of the first dozen years of its existence. He initiates this process with his letter of 30 June 1610 to Mother de Chantal and the first Visitandines, sent in preparation for the feast of the Visitation, which at the time was celebrated on 2 July. Clearly the fruit of Francis's meditative

63 Crichton J.D., *Our Lady in the Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: 1997) 47.

64 *Les Œuvres du bien-heureux François de Sales, Evêque et Prince de Geneve* [...] (Paris, Sebastien Huré: 1652) 1646 (Epistre XLVI, A une Superieure de la Visitation [= Mother de Chantal]): 'je suis tout parmy cette chere Visitation, en laquelle nostre Sauveur, comme un vin tout nouveau, fait bouillonner de toutes parts cette affection amoureuse dedans le ventre de sa sacrée Mere'.

65 Wright W., *Heart Speaks to Heart: The Salesian Tradition*, Traditions of Christian Spirituality Series (Maryknoll, NY: 2004) 53. In Salesian thought, Creation is the first visitation of God's love, and the Incarnation, the second; thus, love 'is the hermeneutical key that unlocks the mystery of Creation and the Incarnation' (McDonnell, *God Desires You* 30). Moreover, following the Franciscan medieval theologian, Bl. John Duns Scotus (d. 1308), Francis holds that the Incarnation has a theological priority over Creation: 'Since the Incarnation is God's "greatest work", it "cannot be an afterthought on the part of God, decreed as a response to the problem of human sin", as a divine rescue mission (Short WJ., *Poverty and Joy: The Franciscan Tradition*, Traditions of Christian Spirituality Series [Maryknoll, NY: 1999] 52–53). According to the Scotist-Salesian school of thought, the Fall modifies only the modality of the Incarnation, not whether it would have taken place. 'The incarnate Son becomes the Redeemer God: His Incarnation will no longer be only a *gift* of infinite love and goodness, but *pardon* offered by Him who, far from finding Himself "overwhelmed" by sin, finds Himself "aroused and called forth by it"' (McDonnell, *God Desires You* 38, author's emphasis).

rumination on this Biblical mystery, this letter signals the selection of the Visitation as the name for the new congregation of women that Francis and Jane co-founded in Annecy a few weeks earlier on 6 June 1610, Trinity Sunday.⁶⁶ Francis continues to reflect on the Visitation mystery for the next twelve years, until his death in 1622. The principal form that these reflections take is homiletic, with the most important being his sermons for the feast of the Visitation in 1618 and 1621, in the Visitation monastery church of St. Joseph in Annecy.⁶⁷ Francis's three word-pictures of the Visitation are thus found in his letter of 1610 and the sermons of 1618 and 1621.⁶⁸

3 Salesian Word-Pictures of the Visitation Mystery

The approach of Francis and his contemporaries, as well as his medieval forbears, to meditating on Biblical mysteries is different from both the modern historical critical method and fundamentalism. The tradition of imaginative meditative prayer, exemplified by the medieval *Meditations on the Life of Christ* and reaching its apex in the Ignatian *Exercises*, approaches Biblical mysteries by focusing on all the persons in the story and on the succession of events—not only the principal scene, but also what precedes and follows it—as a continuous narrative extending ‘temporally both forwards and backwards’,⁶⁹ with a view to ruminating on and savoring each single stage and scene of the mystery that is the subject of meditation. Another attribute of this approach is

66 Stopp E., *Madame de Chantal: Portrait of a Saint* (Westminster, MD: 1963) 125–26; and Ravier, *Francis de Sales* 191–192.

67 Regat C., *La Visitation à Annecy: De la Galerie à la basilique*, Les Amis du Vieil Annecy 18 (Annecy: 2010) 8.

68 For the text of the letter of 30 June 1610, see Annecy edition XIV 323–325 (Lettre 608); for that of the 1618 and 1621 sermons, see Annecy edition IX 157–169, and X 61–77, respectively. Sundry insights into the Visitation mystery are found in other sermons and writings. These two sermons are transcriptions, i.e., they were written down either as Francis spoke, or immediately afterwards by a sister-scribe with a prodigious trained memory (not uncommon in the early modern period) who could recall word for word what Francis said. For a full discussion of this form of Francis's sacred oratory, particularly vis-à-vis the autograph sermon, see Sales F. de, *Sermon Texts on Saint Joseph*, trans. – ed. J. Chorpenning (Toronto: 2000) 41–47. The definitive study of Francis's sermons is Bordes H., *Les sermons de François de Sales*, 9 vols., Thèse pour le Doctorat d'État, Université de Metz, 1989. For a summary of the principal findings of this study, see Bordes H., “The Sermons of St. Francis de Sales”, in Marceau W. (ed.), *Salesian Insights* (Bangalore: 1999) 130–143.

69 Warwick G., *Bernini: Art as Theatre* (New Haven: 2012) 72.

that it embraces both what is explicitly stated in the Gospels, as well as what is plausible and reasonable to assume. For example, Luke's gospel 'retains only the essentials of the story, the fervor and the grace', of the Visitation; however, Mary's journey of 'more than eighty miles [...] almost a week of travel on foot' would have required that she be 'accompanied as would be normal for a young girl'.⁷⁰ Patristic, medieval and early modern readers thus deemed that Joseph accompanied Mary on her visit to Elizabeth.

In the early modern period, the imaginative meditative approach is often supported and facilitated by visual aids such as the engraving of the Visitation (by the Flemish engraver Hieronymus Wierix [1553–1619]) that appears in two books by the Spanish Jesuit Jerome Nadal (1507–1580): *Images of Gospel History* (1593) and *Annotations and Meditations on the Liturgical Gospels* (1595) [Fig. 14.3].⁷¹ The idea for these books originated with Ignatius himself, who suggested to Nadal that he compose an illustrated book to help Jesuit seminarians meditate on the Gospels that they heard read at Mass on Sundays, feast days, and the weekdays of Lent. The *Annotations'* foreword instructs the reader/viewer: 'Spend a whole day, even several days, with each image'.⁷²

The engraving of the Visitation presents a panorama subdivided into nine consecutive scenes, with a letter assigned to each that is keyed to captions identifying the places, characters, and actions depicted. The scenes proceed along a circular path, starting with (A) the Annunciation at Nazareth when Mary learns from the angel about her aged cousin Elizabeth's pregnancy, and continue with (B) Mary's journey with Joseph through the hill country of Judah; (C) Zechariah's house; (D) Mary's arrival; (E) the encounter of Elizabeth and Mary; (F) at the sound of Mary's voice, John the Baptist leaping in his mother's womb; (G) Zechariah and Joseph greeting one another and praising God; (H) John's birth; and (I) Mary and Joseph returning to Nazareth.⁷³ As Walter Melion observes, 'The use of various framing devices, such as the window embrasure, the open doorway, the two pilasters, and the archway, [...] emphasizes

70 Laurentin R., *A Year of Grace with Mary: Rediscovering the Significance of Her Role in the Christian Life*, trans. M.J. Wrenn (Dublin: 1987) 37.

71 See Dekoninck R., "Meditation on Gospel Mysteries", in *Emblemata Sacra: Emblem Books from the Maurits Sabbe Library, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven* [exh. cat., Saint Joseph's University, Philadelphia] (Philadelphia: 2006) 15–22; and idem, "The Emblematic Conversion of the Biblical Image in Jesuit Literature (Nadal 1595–Engelgrave 1648)", *Emblematica: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Emblem Studies* 16 (2008) 299–319.

72 Nadal J., S.J., *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels, Vol. I: The Infancy Narratives, Vol. II, The Passion Narratives, Vol. III, The Resurrection Narratives*, trans. F.A. Homann, S.J., with introductory studies by W.S. Melion (Philadelphia: 2003–2007) 1 102.

73 Nadal, *Annotations and Meditations on the Gospels* 1 115–125.



FIGURE 14.3 Hieronymus Wierix after Bernardino Passeri, *On the Day of the Visitation*, engraving in Jerome Nadal, S.J., *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia* (Antwerp, 1607). Philadelphia, Saint Joseph's University, Jesuitica Collection. PHOTO: COURTESY SAINT JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY PRESS.

the pictorial status of the subsidiary scenes,'⁷⁴ as well as their integration into a continuous unified narrative.⁷⁵

Francis's approach to the Biblical mystery of the Visitation has several points in common with Nadal's engraving. First, it focuses on the mystery in its totality, rather than only on the encounter of Mary and Elizabeth. Second, it includes elements not mentioned in the Gospels. And, finally, it aids meditative prayer by considering the mystery 'in detail and [...] piece by piece.'⁷⁶ At the same time, like the engraving of the Visitation illustrating the *Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ Taken from the Gospels* (1607), by the Jesuit Bartolomeo Ricci (1542–1613), longtime master of novices in Rome, Francis simplifies Nadal by focusing on three rather than nine scenes. Nadal's method of illustration, enumeration, and annotation was adopted in many religious books, and Ricci was the first to do so. The Visitation engraving in Ricci embraces Nadal's approach, while focusing on just three scenes, with the principal scene (B) receiving the greatest attention: (A) Mary's journey to Elizabeth with Joseph; (B) the encounter of Mary and Elizabeth, with the greeting of Joseph (who is partially visible) and Zechariah (who is not visible) possibly intimated in the background; and (C) Mary's return to Nazareth with Joseph [Fig. 14.4].

A key attribute of Francis's three word-pictures of the Visitation is that they are 'action scenes' focusing on the salvific activity of the Redeemer in the womb: transforming Mary into charity itself, penetrating Joseph's heart with hidden rays of love, sanctifying John the Baptist *in utero*, and bringing about a proto-Pentecost in the house of Elizabeth and Zechariah. This approach accords with the Salesian doctrine that love's essence lies in movement—the heart going out to the object loved: 'the true essence of love consists in the movement and effusion of the heart, which [...] culminates in union.'⁷⁷ For Francis, 'God is

74 Melion W.S., "Artifice, Memory, and *Reformatio* in Hieronymus Natalis's *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia*", *Renaissance and Reformation* 22, 3 (1998) 5–34, at 19.

75 Cf. Andrews L., *Story and Space in Renaissance Art: The Rebirth of Continuous Narrative* (New York: 1995) 120. Several notable examples of continuous narrative featuring the Visitation are found in Italian Renaissance painting: Bartolommeo di Giovanni, *Scenes from the Life of St. John the Baptist*, 1490–1495, The Art Institute of Chicago; Piero di Cosimo, *The Visitation with St. Nicholas and St. Anthony Abbot*, ca. 1489–1490, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; and Francesco Granacci, *Scenes from the Life of St. John the Baptist*, ca. 1506–1507, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Nadal develops this tradition by adding letters, captions, and text to his engravings, making them emblematic.

76 *Œuvres* 621 (*Treatise*, Book 6, chap. 5): 'par le menu et [...] pièce à pièce'. On the approach of Francis and Jane to meditative prayer, see Wright W., "Birthing Jesus: A Salesian Understanding of the Christian Life", *Studia Mystica* 13, 1 (Spring 1990) 23–44, esp. 34–36.

77 *Œuvres* 370 (*Treatise*, Book 1, chap. 7): 'la vraie essence de l'amour consiste au mouvement et écoulement du cœur qui [...] se termine à l'union'.



FIGURE 14.4 After Adriaen Collaert?, *The Visitation*, engraving in Bartolomeo Ricci, s.j., *Vita D.N. Iesu Christi ex verbis Evangeliorum* (Rome: Barthol. Zanettum, 1607). Private collection.

PHOTO: TODD ROTHSTEIN.

the God of the human heart'⁷⁸ who passionately seeks communion with the human heart'⁷⁹—this communion being imaged by the Salesian spiritual tradition's master metaphor of a universe of conjoined hearts: the heart of God and human hearts interconnected by their common natures (see *Genesis* 1:26) and, due to sin, now bridged by the human-divine heart of Jesus that makes it possible for human hearts to recover the ability to pulse and beat in union with the divine heart.⁸⁰ Francis learned the dynamics of divine love as *eros* and *agape* early on from the *Song of Songs*, which is the 'hidden text' or 'conceptual world' behind Francis's picturing of the Visitation.⁸¹ The God of the human heart now becomes flesh as the Savior of the world in the womb of Mary at the Annunciation, and soon after He becomes incarnate, He is on the move to begin His redemptive mission of communion with human hearts, in the mystery of the Visitation. Reflecting on the motivation for the Visitation in his 1618 sermon for the feast, Francis avers: 'charity is never idle'.⁸²

Corroborating this interpretation is the fact that the *Song* is also the lens through which the post-Tridentine liturgical tradition views the Visitation mystery. In the reform of the liturgical books mandated by the Council of Trent, Pope St. Pius V (reigned 1566–1572) established 2 July (chosen because it was the day after the octave of the feast of John the Baptist's birth [24 June]) as the date for the universal celebration of the feast of the Visitation, suppressed other offices and Masses in use for the feast, and drew up the proper for the day. The Mass readings were *Song* 2:8–14 and *Luke* 1:39–47, which form a diptych, and three consecutive passages from the *Song* (2: 1–7, 2:8–13, and 2:13–17) were selected for the lessons for the first nocturn at Matins, with several verses

78 *Œuvres* 395 (*Treatise*, Book 1, chap. 15): 'Dieu est Dieu du cœur humain'. This is the leit-motif of Pope Benedict XVI's General Audience address of 2 Mar. 2011 on St. Francis de Sales: see idem., *Doctors of the Church* (Huntington, IN: 2011) 251–257.

79 McDonnell, *God Desires You* 30.

80 See Wright, *Heart Speaks to Heart*, which employs the word-picture of the world of hearts as an interpretive lens for understanding the history of the Salesian spiritual tradition from its inception and diffusion in the seventeenth century, through its recovery and expansion after the French Revolution in the nineteenth-century Salesian Pentecost, and down to the present.

81 On the idea of the 'hidden text' or 'conceptual world' behind the text relative to the Salesian *œuvre*, see Wright W., "The *Introduction to the Devout Life* as Spiritual Classic", in Chorpennig J. (ed.), *Encountering Anew the Familiar: Francis de Sales's "Introduction to the Devout Life" at 400 Years* (Rome: 2012) 23–35, esp. 31–32.

82 Annecy edition IX 159: 'la charité n'est point oysive'.

repeated in the responsories at the first and second nocturns.⁸³ While some verses of the selections from the *Song* are intended to be applied to Mary, others evoke the Redeemer in the womb: 'Hark! my lover—here he comes springing across the mountains, leaping across the hills. [...] Here he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattices' (*Song* 2:8, 10).⁸⁴ These verses were proclaimed in the second lesson of the first nocturn and in the first reading at Mass, and *Song* 2:8 is repeated in the responsory after the fourth lesson of the second nocturn. This is the liturgy for the feast of the Visitation that Francis celebrated and prayed, as his Breviary, preserved in the Musée de la Visitation in Moulins, attests [Fig. 14.5].⁸⁵ The Visitation was indeed 'a lover's visitation',⁸⁶ and the *Song*'s prominence in the feast's Mass and Divine Office keeps this perspective clearly in focus.

Francis's three word-pictures are 'a series of [...] snapshot-like moments',⁸⁷ or "close-ups" of favorite scenes,⁸⁸ or 'tableaux'⁸⁹ that may be arranged as a continuous narrative or story in a manner akin to the Ricci engraving. Alternately,

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- 83 Sorci P., "La Visitazione nella liturgia", *Theotokos* 5 (1997) 53–81, esp. 67–68. I thank Fr. Thomas Thompson, S.M., of the International Marian Research Institute, University of Dayton, for generously sharing this article with me. In the post-Vatican II liturgical calendar, the feast of the Visitation was moved to 31 May because it was thought that a date between the solemnities of the Annunciation of the Lord (25 March) and the Birth of John the Baptist (24 June) accords better with the gospel story: see Adam A., *The Liturgical Year: Its History & Its Meaning after the Reform of the Liturgy*, trans. M.J. O'Connell (Collegeville, MN: 1981) 214.
- 84 *The Roman Breviary: An Approved English Translation Complete in One Volume from the Official Text of the Breviarum Romanum Authorized by the Holy See* (New York: 1964) 933–934.
- 85 The Tridentine Roman Breviary was first published in 1568, and the Roman Missal followed in 1570. They were adopted in Francis's native diocese of Geneva during the episcopate of Ange Justiniani (1568–78) and in the dioceses of France between 1580 and 1610. See Baud H., *Histoire du diocèse Genève-Annecy*, *Histoire des diocèses de France* 19 (Paris: 1985) 106; and Jounel P., "From the Council of Trent to Vatican Council II", in Martimort A.G. (ed.), *The Church at Prayer: An Introduction to the Liturgy*, 4 vols. (Collegeville, MN: 1986–1988) I 63–84, esp. 67, 71.
- 86 Wright, *Heart Speaks to Heart* 53.
- 87 Wright, "Birthing Jesus" 26.
- 88 Rayez A., "The Golden Age of Medieval Devotion: The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries", in *Jesus in Christian Devotion and Contemplation*, trans. P. Oligny (St. Meinrad, IN: 1974) 44–85, esp. 52. This book is an English translation of the article, "Humanité du Christ (Dévotion et contemplation)", in the *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, vol. 8 (Paris, 1969) 1033–1108.
- 89 Warwick, *Bernini* 72.

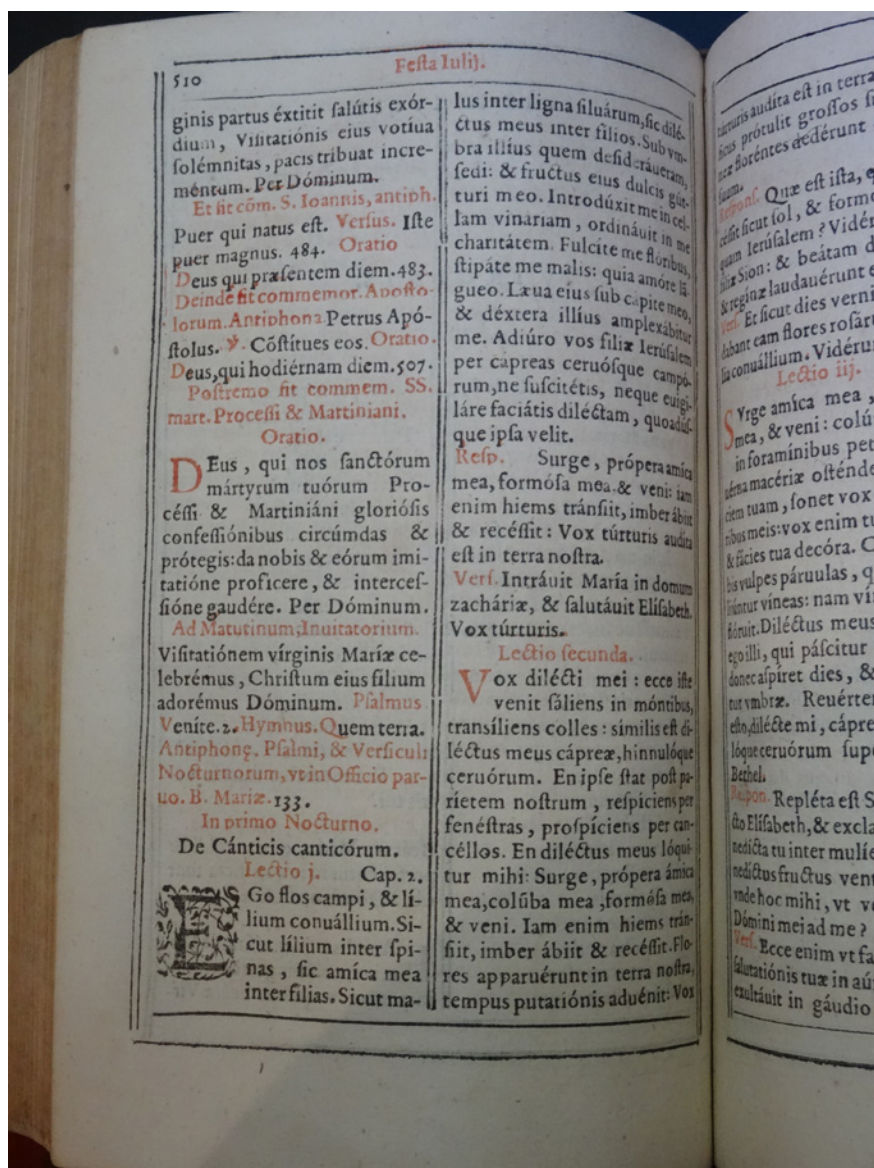


FIGURE 14.5 First Nocturn at Matins for the Feast of the Visitation, from St. Francis de Sales's *Breviarium Romanum*, ex Decreto Sacrosancti Concilii Tridentini restitutum [...] *Pars hiemalis* (Paris: Apud Societatem Typographicam Librorum Officii Ecclesiastici, ex Decreto Concilii Tridentini, 1606) 510. Moulins, Musée de la Visitation.

PHOTO: COURTESY MUSÉE DE LA VISITATION.

they may also be considered as forming a 'virtual triptych', and read from left to right. In either case, their arrangement may function as a *machina memorialis*, that is, as a matrix, scheme, or pattern that is a vehicle that facilitates their organization and recall as mental images and the ideas associated with them.⁹⁰

Scene 1: A Glorious Pilgrimage with the Divine Cupid in the Womb

The focus of Francis's letter of 30 June 1610 is not the encounter of Mary and Elizabeth, which the feast of the Visitation celebrates, but the events preceding it. Francis's aim is to assist Mother de Chantal and the first Visitandines (whom he also addresses in this letter, which was possibly read aloud to the little community) to prepare to celebrate this feast by prayerfully observing its vigil (1 July). For this purpose, he proffers a composition of place ('fabrication du lieu'), which 'is nothing else than to picture in the imagination the entire mystery on which you wish to meditate as if it really and actually took place here before us':⁹¹ 'But tomorrow, you will see a poor, young little girl, pregnant with the Son of God, who gently comes to prevail upon her beloved and holy husband for permission to undertake a holy visit to her aged cousin Elizabeth; you will see how she says goodbye to her dear neighbors for the "three months" (*Luke* 1:56) which she expects to be away and "in the mountains" (*Luke* 1:39). [...] The angels make ready to accompany her, and St. Joseph to lead her with heartfelt affection'.⁹²

Francis's emphasis on seeing (the anaphora, 'vous verres', 'you will see') casts into relief the pictorial nature of this guided meditation. As it happens, this meditation is subdivided into a principal scene and two ancillary ones. Of the three scenes, Francis devotes the most attention (and space) to Mary and Joseph's journey-pilgrimage, which occupies the foreground and is set against background scenes of Mary asking Joseph's permission to visit Elizabeth and

90 See Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* 1–10, 22–24, 92–94.

91 *Œuvres* 85 (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, Part 2, chap. 4): 'ce n'est autre chose que de proposer à son imagination le corps du mystère que l'on veut méditer, comme s'il se passait réellement et de fait en notre présence.'

92 Annecy edition XIV 324: 'Mais demain, vous verres la pauvre petite jeune Dame, enceinte du Filz de Dieu, qui vient doucement occuper l'esprit de son cher et saint mari pour avoir le congé de faire la sainte visite de sa vieille cousine Elizabeth; vous verres comme elle dit a Dieu a ses cheres voysines pour "trois moys" (*Luke* 1:56) qu'elle pense estre aux chams et "es montaignes" (*Luke* 1:39). [...] Les Anges se disposent a l'accompagner, et saint Joseph a la conduire cordialement. Francis held that Mary 'did not [...] leave on the very day of the Incarnation, but some days later, and "proceeded in haste into the hill country of Judah" (*Luke* 1:39)' ('Elle ne sortit donc pas le jour mesme de l'Incarnation, ains quelques jours apres, et "s'en alla en grande diligence par les montaignes de Juda" (*Luke* 1:39)') (Annecy edition x 65).

bidding farewell to her neighbors. What stands out in the foreground scene is not simply Joseph's presence, which by this time was commonplace in devotional literature and sacred art,⁹³ but the extraordinary interaction depicted between the unborn Jesus and His foster-father.

The word-picture of the foreground scene could not be more vivid and memorable. The Visitation is one of the 'joyful mysteries', and Francis shows Joseph's sharing in the joy of Mary, who is pregnant with 'Love Itself in her womb':⁹⁴ 'I would very much like to know something of the conversations between these two great souls, because you would indeed be pleased that I should tell it to you. But consider that the Virgin is conscious only of what is within her, and that she breathes only the Savior; St. Joseph, for his part, yearns only for the Savior, who, with hidden rays, inspires his heart with a thousand extraordinary sentiments. And as wines shut up in cellars subtly exude the fragrance of "flowering vines" (*Song* 2:13), so the heart of this holy Patriarch subtly exudes the fragrance, vigor, and strength of this little Infant who blossoms within his beautiful vineyard. O God, what a glorious pilgrimage!'⁹⁵

Given Francis's predilection for the *Song of Songs*, it is hardly surprising that he refers to it to speak of the dynamic of love between the Redeemer in Mary's womb and Joseph. But what is most striking about this passage is that it evokes motifs from late medieval and early modern sacred art so as to create the impression for Mother de Chantal and her companions that they are looking at a painting.⁹⁶ Francis, of course, is not describing an actual painting,

93 See, e.g., *Sermon Texts on Saint Joseph* 144–150 (Appendix 2: "St. Joseph and the Biblical Mystery of the Visitation"); and Wilson C., "St. Joseph as *Custos* in the *Summa* of Isidoro Isolano and in Italian Renaissance Art", in Toschi L. (ed.), *St. Joseph Studies: Papers in English from the Seventh and Eighth International St. Joseph Symposia, Malta 1997 and El Salvador 2001* (Santa Cruz, CA: 2002) 89–120, esp. 99–103.

94 Annecy edition IX 159: 'l'amour mesme en ses entrailles'. Also see Dompnier B., "La Visitation, saint François de Sales et la dévotion à saint Joseph", in *St. François de Sales: Portraits croisés, Mémoires et documents publiés par l'Académie salesienne*, t. 117 (Annecy: 2010) 291–308, esp. 304.

95 Annecy edition XIV 324: 'Je voudrais bien sçavoir quelque chose des entretiens de ces deux grandes ames, car vous prendriez bien playsir que je vous le dise. Mais pensez que la Vierge ne sent que ce de quoy ell'est pleyne et qu'elle ne respire que le Sauveur; saint Joseph, reciproquement, n'aspire qu'au Sauveur qui, par des rayons secretz, luy touche le cœur de mille extraordinaires sentimens. Et comme les vins enfermés dans les caves ressentent sans la sentir l'odeur des "vignes florissantes" (*Song* 2:13), ainsy le cœur de ce saint Patriarche ressent, sans la sentir, l'odeur, la vigueur et la force du petit Enfant qui fleurit en sa belle vigne. O Dieu, quel beau pelerinage'.

96 See Bath M., *Speaking Pictures: English Emblem Books and Renaissance Culture* (London – New York: 1994) 253.

but crafting a pictorial image ‘imaginable as a painting’⁹⁷ by adapting three motifs from the visual tradition to articulate his own distinctive interpretation of the Visitation mystery.

First, Francis’s making visible, through his poetic prose, the activity of Jesus in the womb evokes late medieval paintings of the Visitation that show the fully intact figures of the unborn Jesus and John the Baptist, with the Precursor kneeling and adoring Christ, who blesses him, either in the bubble of their mothers’ transparent wombs or as hovering in radiating mandorlas in front of them [Fig. 14.6]. This subject appears in a range of media, including painting, tapestries, and sculpture, in which ‘wooden or ivory statues of Mary and Elizabeth [are] hinged to open and reveal their sons’.⁹⁸ Such images were in use as private devotional images well into the early modern period.⁹⁹ For his part, Francis reworks this motif by making Joseph, rather than John, the object of the Savior’s action.

Second, the image of the unborn Jesus penetrating Joseph’s heart with hidden rays—the ray being a variant on the arrow or dart—likewise reflects the widespread practice in early modern Catholic literature and art of identifying the Christ Child with Cupid and the allegorical figure of Divine Love, both of

97 Hagstrum J., *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago: 1958) xxii.

98 Johnson K.O., *Rosary: Mysteries, Meditations, and the Telling of the Beads* (Dallas: 1996) 225. Also see Réau L., *Iconographie de l’art chrétien*, 3 vols. (Paris: 1955–1959; reprint, Millwood, NY: 1988) II, part 2, 199–202; Schiller G., *Iconography of Christian Art*, trans. J. Seligman, 2 vols. (Greenwich, CT: 1971–1972) I 56; and Seward J., *Redeemer in the Womb: Jesus Living in Mary* (San Francisco: 1993) 131.

99 The most comprehensive study of this Visitation iconography is Velu A.-M., *La Visitation dans l’art: Orient et Occident V^e–XVI^e siècle* (Paris: 2012), who attributes the demise of this image to the strictures of the post-Tridentine iconographer Johannes Molanus (1533–1585), a member of the theology faculty at Louvain, who repudiated Annunciation images with the Christ Child carrying the cross on His shoulders as He descends toward Mary on a beam of light because it corresponds to the Valentinian heresy, which held that Jesus was not formed in the Virgin’s womb, but rather was sent down from heaven by God, entering fully formed into her womb (194–195). Post-Tridentine image reform was considerably less centralized and uniform than might be thought: see, e.g., Noyes R., “*Aut numquid post annos mille quingentos docenda est Ecclesia Catholica quomodo sacrae imagines pingantur?*: Post-Tridentine Image Reform and the Myth of Gabriele Paleotti”, *Catholic Historical Review* 99 (2013) 239–261. Annunciation images with the fully formed Divine Infant were not officially condemned by the Holy See until the eighteenth century: see Robb D.M., “The Iconography of the Annunciation in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries”, *Art Bulletin* 18 (1936) 480–526, esp. 526.



FIGURE 14.6 *Castilian Master, The Visitation, 15th century. Madrid, Museo Lazaro Galdiano.*
PHOTO © GIANNI DAGLO ORTI / THE ART ARCHIVE AT ART RESOURCE, NY.

whom are represented using arrows to inflame their objects with love.¹⁰⁰ The trope of the divine archer has a privileged place in Salesian spirituality, particularly in connection with Francis's teaching on the primacy of divine inspirations: 'God, [...] continually drawing [...] arrows from the quiver of His infinite beauty, wounds the souls of those who love Him'.¹⁰¹ According to Francis, inspirations are God's 'arrow of love' ('sagette d'amour') and 'a heavenly ray' ('un rayon céleste')¹⁰² that transfix the human heart, bringing 'into our hearts a warm light that makes us see the good and fires us on to its pursuit',¹⁰³ and 'lifting up our thoughts and propelling our affections into the air of God's love'.¹⁰⁴

Francis held that Mary's setting out to visit Elizabeth was the Virgin's consent and response to a divine inspiration directed to perfecting the love of God by love of neighbor that she received upon hearing from the angel Gabriel that Elizabeth had in her old age conceived a son (*Luke* 1:36).¹⁰⁵ Comparably, Joseph receives an inspiration directed to the perfection of love when 'the Savior [...], with hidden rays, inspires [Joseph's] heart'.¹⁰⁶ The divine Cupid *in utero* thus sets in motion the trajectory of Joseph's martyrdom of love in the service of His infancy and hidden life that culminates, when the saint's mission is completed, with Joseph's dying of love and subsequently being bodily assumed into heaven as an expression of Jesus's filial gratitude for Joseph's paternal love and service.¹⁰⁷ The ideal of martyrdom through love is at the core of Salesian and Visitandine spirituality.¹⁰⁸

100 Newman B., "Love's Arrows: Christ as Cupid in Late Medieval Art and Devotion", in Hamburger J. – Bouché A.-M. (eds.), *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: 2006) 263–286, esp. 264.

101 *Œuvres* 651 (*Treatise*, Book 6, chap. 13): 'Dieu, [...] tirant continuellement [...] des sagettes du carquois de son infinie beauté, blesse l'âme de ses amants'.

102 Ibid. 436 (*Treatise*, Book 2, chap. 9), and 740 (*Treatise*, Book 8, chap. 10), respectively.

103 Ibid. 740 (*Treatise*, Book 8, chap. 10): 'dans nos cœurs une lumière chaleureuse, par laquelle il nous fait voir le bien and nous échauffe au pourchas d'icelui'.

104 Ibid. 435 (*Treatise*, Book 2, chap. 9): 'relevant nos pensées et poussant nos affections en l'air du divin amour'.

105 Annecy edition IX 158, and x 65.

106 Annecy edition XIV 324: 'le Sauveur [...], par des rayons secretz, luy touche le cœur'.

107 *Œuvres* 333–334 (*Treatise*, Dedictory Prayer), and 702–703 (*Treatise*, Book 7, chap. 13); Annecy edition VI 369–370. Also see Chorpenning J., "Francis de Sales's Emblematic Interpretation of the Death of St. Joseph (*Treatise on the Love of God*, Book 7, chapter 13)", in Campa P. – Daly P. (eds.), *Emblematic Images and Religious Texts: Studies in Honor of G. Richard Dimler, S.J.*, Early Modern Catholicism and the Visual Arts Series 2 (Philadelphia: 2010) 123–143.

108 See Wright W., *Bond of Perfection: Jeanne de Chantal & François de Sales* (New York: 1985; new enhanced edition, Stella Niagara, NY: 2001) 153–155, 172.



FIGURE 14.7 Adriaen Collaert and Cornelis Galle, *Transverberation of St. Teresa of Ávila*, engraving from *Vita B. Virginis Teresiae a Iesu* (first published in 1613), pl. 8. Private collection.

PHOTO: TODD ROTHSTEIN.

Third, Joseph's heart being the object of Jesus's rays draws on the medieval tradition of the piercing of the heart as a love-motif, notably exemplified by Augustine's attribute of a pierced heart (based on *Confessions* 9.3, 'You will pierce our heart with the arrow of Your love') and given renewed currency in the early modern period by the transverberation of St. Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582) [Fig. 14.7].¹⁰⁹ An image contemporary with Francis that links Jesus in the guise of Cupid with Teresa's transverberation is an early seventeenth-century

109 Knipping, J.B., *Heaven on Earth: Iconography of the Counter-Reformation in the Netherlands*, 2 vols. (Nieuwkoop – Leiden: 1974) 1 98. The word 'transverberation' comes from the Latin *transverberare*, meaning 'to thrust or pierce through, transfix, perforate'. It refers to Teresa's ecstatic vision of ca. 1560—recounted in the *Book of Her Life* (begun in 1562 and completed in 1565), chapter 29—of an angel piercing her heart with 'a large golden dart and at the end of the iron tip there appeared to be a little fire' and that left her 'all on fire with great love of God' (Teresa of Ávila, *The Book of Her Life*, trans. K. Kavanaugh – O. Rodríguez, introduction by J. Bilinkoff (Indianapolis: 2008) 200.

engraving of *The Transverberation of St. Teresa of Ávila with the Holy Family*, by the Flemish engraver Anton II Wierix (1555/1559–1604) [Fig. 14.8]. This engraving is a significant reinterpretation of Teresa's most renowned mystical experience: the angel is replaced as archer by the Christ Child, who has already shot one arrow into Teresa's breast and prepares to launch another.¹¹⁰

Francis's substitution of Joseph for Teresa as the object of Jesus's arrows of love is not without precedent. This phenomenon seems to originate with Teresa's disciple and interpreter, Jerome Gracián (1545–1614), who elaborates this theme in his *Summary of the Excellencies of St. Joseph* (first published in Spanish and Italian in 1597), with which Francis was likely familiar.¹¹¹ Expounding on the intimacy between Jesus and Joseph, the Discalced Carmelite friar declares: 'fiery darts of divine love [...] would be emitted from the Christ Child's mouth when He kissed Joseph and would penetrate and inflame Joseph's heart.'¹¹² What is new in Francis's treatment of Jesus's impact on Joseph is his portrayal of this process commencing while the Savior was still *in utero*.

In this first of his meditations on the Visitation, then, Francis composes a vivid pictorial scene evoking familiar iconographic motifs so as to suggest to Mother de Chantal and the first Visitandines that they are beholding a painting. This correlates with the idea, disseminated by early modern Jesuit manuals on meditative prayer, that meditation on the life of Christ and the Virgin was analogous to viewing a painting, as both require close scrutiny of the subject, great concentration, and attentiveness to the smallest details.¹¹³ At the same time, Francis presents the Visitation in terms of the Salesian world of hearts that casts into relief the divine-human love dynamic, which is the core of this mystery: the union of the hearts of Mary, who 'breathes only the Savior' ('ne respire que le Sauveur'), and of Joseph, who 'yearns only for the Savior' ('n'aspire

110 See Wilson Ch., "Where's Teresa? The Construction of Teresa of Ávila in the Visual Arts," in Weber A. (ed.), *Approaches to Teaching Teresa of Ávila and the Spanish Mystics* (New York: 2009) 190–201, esp. 195–198; and idem, "St. Teresa of Ávila's Martyrdom: Images of Her Transverberation in Mexican Colonial Painting," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 74–75 (1999) 211–233, esp. 222.

111 The affinity between Francis's and Gracián's theology of St. Joseph has recently been noted by Dompnier, "La Visitation, saint François de Sales et la dévotion à saint Joseph" 304–305.

112 Gracián J. de la Madre de Dios, *Obras*, vol. 2, ed. S. de Santa Teresa, Biblioteca mística carmelitana (Burgos: 1933) 403: 'las llamaradas de divino amor [...] saldrían de la boca del Niño cuando bease a José y penetrarían sus entrañas y abrasarían su corazón'.

113 Smith J.C., *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany* (Princeton: 2002) 47–48.



FIGURE 14.8 Anton II Wierix, *Transverberation of St. Teresa of Ávila with the Holy Family* (ca. 1622–1624), engraving. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1951 (51.501.6213).

IMAGE © THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.

PHOTO: ART RESOURCE, NY.

qu'au Sauveur'), with the heart of the unborn Jesus, who begins His sanctifying mission and salvific activity on the journey-pilgrimage to visit Elizabeth and Zechariah.

Scene 2: Mary's Cooperation in the Salvation of the World and Sanctification of Souls

Once incarnate in the Virgin's womb, the divine lover is eager to set out on His salvific mission. 'The true mark of a divine visitation', Francis avers, 'is transformation'.¹¹⁴ The first person transformed by the advent of the Word made flesh is His mother, and then, as we have seen, Joseph. Because she 'bore Love Itself in her womb', Mary 'not only possessed charity, but she had also received it in such plenitude that she was charity itself. She had conceived Him who, being all love, had transformed her into love itself'.¹¹⁵ Mary thus 'made continual acts of love, not only to God, with whom she was united by the most perfect love possible, but she also possessed love of neighbor in a most perfect degree, which made her ardently desire the salvation of the whole world and the sanctification of souls; and knowing that she could cooperate with that of St. John, still in the womb of St. Elizabeth, she went there "in all haste" (*Luke 1:39*)'.¹¹⁶

Francis's second word-picture of the Visitation, therefore, portrays the encounter of Mary and Elizabeth at the moment of Jesus's sanctification of John the Baptist in his mother's womb [Fig. 14.6]. In his sermon for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of 1622 (just three weeks before his death), Francis paints a word-image that approximates the iconographic tradition: 'Our Lord and St. John the Baptist visited each other while in the wombs of their mothers [...], and it is maintained that the glorious Precursor knelt to adore his Savior, and that at that very instant he was given the use of reason'.¹¹⁷ Significantly,

114 Annecy edition x 76: 'C'est la vraye marque de la divine visite que la transformation'.

115 Annecy edition ix 159, 161, respectively: 'elle avoit l'amour mesme en ses entrailles'; 'non seulement elle avoit la charité, mais elle l'avoit receüe en telle plenitude qu'elle estoit la charité mesme. Elle avoit conceu Celuy qui estant tout amour l'avoit rendue l'amour mesme'.

116 Annecy edition ix 159: 'Elle estoit en des continuelz actes d'amour, non seulement envers Dieu avec lequel elle estoit unie par la plus parfaite dilection qui se puisse dire, mais encores elle avoit l'amour du prochain en un degré de tres grande perfection, qui luy faisoit desirer ardemment le salut de tout le monde et la sanctification des ames; et sçachant qu'elle pouvoit cooperer à celle de saint Jean, encores dans le ventre de sainte Elizabeth, elle y alla "en grande diligence" (*Luke 1:39*)'.

117 Annecy edition x 403: 'Nostre Seigneur et saint Jean Baptiste se visiterent dans le ventre de leurs meres [...], et l'on tient que le glorieux Precurseur se mit à genoux pour adorer son Sauveur, et que l'usage de rayson luy fut donné à mesme instant'.

two years earlier, in a sermon for the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady (21 November 1620), Francis reprises the image of the ray of light, used in 1610 to describe how the Redeemer in the womb quickened St. Joseph's heart, to speak of John's sanctification: 'Theologians assure us that Our Lord, casting a ray of His light and grace into the soul of St. John the Baptist when he was still in the womb of St. Elizabeth, sanctified him and gave him the use of reason with the gift of faith by which, having recognized his God in the womb of the most holy Virgin, he adored Him and consecrated himself to His service'.¹¹⁸

Scene 3: The Visitation as a Proto-Pentecost

Francis's first and second word-pictures illustrate how 'the transforming visitation' of the Incarnation 'radiated outward in ever expanding circles' from the Savior in the womb to Mary, Joseph, and John the Baptist *in utero*. 'Love's dynamism could not be contained'.¹¹⁹ Mary, inside of whom Jesus lives, plays a necessary and essential mediatory role in this process as the Ark of the new Covenant:¹²⁰ first, in the prenatal relationship between Jesus and Joseph; then in the sanctification of John the Baptist and the transformation of his parents.

Francis envisions the impact of the Visitation upon the family and house of Elizabeth and Zechariah as a 'proto-Pentecost',¹²¹ which is the subject of his third word-picture of this mystery: 'This incomparable Virgin then enters

118 Annecy edition IX 384–385: 'Les theologiens nous assurent que Nostre Seigneur jettant un rayon de sa lumiere et de sa grace dans l'ame de saint Jean Baptiste lors qu'il estoit encor aux entrailles de sainte Elizabeth, le sanctifia et luy donna l'usage de rayon avec la foy, par laquelle ayant reconneu son Dieu dans le ventre de la tres sainte Vierge, il l'adora et se consacra à son service'.

119 Wright, *Heart Speaks to Heart* 55. For analysis of this process, see Chorpenning J. "Connecting Mysteries: The Visitation and the Holy Family in the Salesian Tradition (from St. Francis de Sales to the *Année Sainte* [1867–1871])", in *La Sagrada Familia en el siglo XIX: Actas del Cuarto Congreso Internacional sobre la Sagrada Familia en ocasión del Centenario de la revista "La Sagrada Familia," Barcelona – Begues, 8–13 de septiembre de 1998* (Barcelona: 1999) 811–833, esp. 814–827 (Spanish translation: *Estudios Josefinos* 53, no. 105 [1999] 3–30); and idem, "'Mother of Our Savior and Cooperator in Our Salvation': *Imitatio Mariae* and the Biblical Mystery of the Visitation in St. Francis de Sales", *Marian Studies* 53 (2002) 63–85, esp. 73–80.

120 See Annecy edition IX 166. Also see Laurentin R., *The Truth of Christmas Beyond the Myths: The Gospels of the Infancy of Christ*, trans. M.J. Wrenn et al. (Petersham, MA: 1986) 99; Crichton, *Our Lady in the Liturgy* 49; Chorpenning, "Connecting Mysteries" 826; and idem, "Mother of Our Savior and Cooperator in Our Salvation" 78.

121 This term, used by Laurentin, *The Truth of Christmas Beyond the Myths* 99, accords with Francis's thinking, for, as a newly ordained priest, the saint links the Visitation and Pentecost in a sermon for the feast of St. Peter in 1593. The person of Mary connects these two events: on both occasions the Holy Spirit is poured forth through her mediation and

“Zechariah’s house” (*Luke* 1:40), and with her a superabundance of blessings for this family.¹²² Mary’s ‘visit’, Francis continues, ‘filled the whole family of Zechariah with the Holy Spirit’.¹²³ ‘Indeed, the whole house was overwhelmed with joy: the infant leapt for joy, the father recovered his speech, the mother “was filled with the Holy Spirit” (*Luke* 1:41) and received the gift of prophecy, for on seeing this blessed Lady enter her house, she exclaimed: “Who am I that the Mother of my Lord should come to visit me?” (*Luke* 1:43)’.¹²⁴

Within a decade of Francis’s two sermons for the feast of the Visitation, a splendid painting, *The Visitation with Saints*, by Guillaume Ernest Grève (d. 1639), known as Guilherme, commissioned in 1626 and completed in 1631 for the high altar of the Visitation monastery in Valence (France) and at present in the Musée de la Visitation in Moulins, provides a visual counterpart to our saint’s word-picture of the Visitation as a proto-Pentecost [Fig. 14.9].¹²⁵ To portray the mystery of the Visitation, Guilherme employs the baroque spatial convention, ubiquitous in religious art of the period, of the break-through of heaven to earth through the redemptive power of divine love.¹²⁶ The Incarnation took place at the Annunciation through the power of the Holy Spirit (*Luke* 1:35). Now, as Guilherme shows, at the inspiration of the Spirit, visible as a dove amidst the angelic host in glory in the luminous celestial realm above, the mystery of the Visitation unfolds and the Visitation Order comes into being on earth.

The artist represents the Visitation mystery as a ‘double visitation’: Mary and Elizabeth in the center, and to the left, Joseph and Zechariah. Behind the two men, in the background, is seen a lush mountainous landscape, with a fruit tree and obelisk, which is symbolic of the sun-ray.¹²⁷ Perhaps this landscape suggests the restoration of paradise brought about by the Incarnation of the

intercession (see Annecy edition VII 37). Also see Chorpenning, “Connecting Mysteries” 824–826; and idem, “Mother of Our Savior and Cooperator in Our Salvation” 79–80.

122 Annecy edition X 69: ‘Cette Vierge incomparable entre donc “en la maison de Zacharie” [*Luke* 1:40], et avec elle un comble de benedictions pour cette famille’.

123 Ibid. 71: ‘Cette visite remplit du Saint Esprit toute la maison de Zacharie’.

124 Annecy edition IX 166–167: ‘Certes, toute la mayson en fut comblée de joye: l’enfant tressaillit, le pere recouvra la parole, la mere “fut remplie du Saint Esprit” (*Luke* 1:41) et receut le don de prophetie, car voyant cette sainte Dame entrer dans sa mayson elle s’escria: “D’où me vient cecy que la Mere de mon Dieu me soit venue visiter?” (*Luke* 1:43)’.

125 Picaud G. – Foisselon J., *Au cœur de la Visitation: Trésors de la vie monastique en Europe, 400^e anniversaire de l’ordre* [exh. cat., Musée de la Visitation, Moulins] (Paris – Moulins: 2010), 44, 247–248.

126 Hartt F., *Love in Baroque Art* (Locust Valley, NY: 1964) 6.

127 Cirlot J.E., *A Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. J. Sage (New York: 1971) 239.



FIGURE 14.9 *Guillaume Ernest Grève, known as Guilherme, The Visitation with Saints, painted for the high altar of the chapel of the Visitation Monastery, Valence (1626–1631). Oil on canvas. Moulins, Musée de la Visitation.*
PHOTO: COURTESY MUSÉE DE LA VISITATION.

divine 'Sun of justice' (*Malachi* 3:20), who also, while in Mary's womb, casts His rays to warm Joseph's heart with inspirations and to sanctify John the Baptist *in utero*.¹²⁸

On the right, Francis and Augustine, whose rule Francis adopted for the Visitation Order, contemplate the mystery taking place before them. The boy with the ladle beside Augustine is one of the saint's attributes, alluding to his vision of a child trying to empty the sea into a hollow of sand. When asked by Augustine if he would ever succeed, the boy replies, 'Certainly before you understand the essence of God'.¹²⁹ In the foreground, the Apostles Peter and Paul kneel, with their respective attributes—the keys of heaven for the former, and the sword with which he was beheaded for the latter; each also holds the book of his epistles. Renaissance art theorists recommended that painters include a figure who witnesses the scene depicted as well as draws viewers' attention to it so that they feel that they are not just looking at a painting but are part of what they see.¹³⁰ Here Peter fulfills this role: he looks directly at viewers to engage and draw them into the Visitation mystery.

Conclusion

The Church's recognition of the 'shining jewel'¹³¹ of the Biblical mystery of the Visitation coincides with Francis's lifetime. It was not until 1568, when the Dominican Pope, Pius V, added the feast of the Visitation to the Roman Calendar, that it becomes universally observed in the West. Indicative of the prominence now given this mystery was that the pope himself formulated the feast's Mass and Divine Office. In the feast's liturgy, the *Song of Songs* is the lens through which the Visitation is viewed, with the *Song* 2:8–14 and Luke's account of the Visitation (1:39–47) forming a diptych at Mass, and the *Song* constituting the three readings for the first nocturn at Matins. Certainly, this liturgical tradition nurtures and nourishes Francis's devotion to and understanding of this mystery, especially in view of his lifelong love affair with the *Song* dating to his student days in Paris, when he attended G  n  brard's erudite exegetical lectures at the Sorbonne. For his part, Francis contributes in no small way to the ecclesial appreciation of the Visitation mystery by dedicating

128 On the Biblical image of the 'Sun of justice' in Francis's writings, see Lemaire H., *Les images chez St. Fran  ois de Sales* (Paris: 1962) 429.

129 Giorgi R., *Saints in Art*, ed. S. Zuffi – trans. T.M. Hartmann (Los Angeles: 2003) 46.

130 Van Eck, *Classical Rhetoric and the Visual Arts in Early Modern Europe* 65, 73–75.

131 Obbard, *A Year with Mary* 104.

the order that he co-founded with Mother de Chantal to it, as well as by expounding its meaning in his writings and sermons. A hallmark of the latter is Francis's recourse to visual and meditative traditions to help his listeners and readers 'see' the dynamics of divine love that unfold and are made visible in this Biblical mystery.

How was Francis's picturing of the dynamics of divine love in the Biblical mystery of the Visitation received by his contemporaries, such as Mother de Chantal and the nascent Visitation order? Perhaps the closest we can come to an answer is in the longer version of Francis's letter of 30 June 1610, which exists in two redactions. There is the version found in the Annecy edition (1892–1964), which is shorter than the older and longer redaction included in editions of Francis's correspondence beginning in 1626 (under the supervision of Mother de Chantal) until the Annecy edition. The latter assesses the approximately two paragraphs added to the longer version as an editorial interpolation.¹³² Nonetheless, what is of interest in the present context is that the longer redaction offers a clue to how Francis's approach may have been received. The 'interpolation' first pivots from our Scene 1 to Scene 3, from the journey-pilgrimage of Mary and Joseph with Jesus *in utero* to the impact of the Virgin with the Redeemer in the womb upon the house of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Then it focuses on appropriation of this mystery: rather than being like Mary, filled with Jesus, Francis confesses, 'My God, [...] I marvel at myself that I am still so full of self, after having received Communion so often'.¹³³

The longer redaction underscores that, on one hand, Francis's contemporaries were adept in the meditative art of the continuous narrative, mentally keeping in tandem various scenes of a mystery such as the three word-pictures

132 See Annecy edition XIV 324–325, note 2. The longer version of this letter has been consulted in the 1652 folio reference edition of Francis's works: *Les Œuvres du bien-heureux François de Sales* (also cited in note 64 above). Interestingly, Dom Henry Benedict Mackey, who was one of the principal collaborators in the Annecy edition, included the longer version of this letter in the translation of it provided in *St. Francis de Sales, Letters to Persons in Religion*, trans. H.B. Mackey (1888; Westminster, MD: 1943) 438–440, which, of course, predated the Annecy edition. On Mackey, see Power J., "Henry Benedict Mackey, O.S.B., Nineteenth-Century Interpreter of St. Francis de Sales", *Downside Review* 120 (2002) 215–228; reprinted in Wisniewski D. (ed.), *Heart of Hearts: Writings on the Life and Spirit of St. Francis de Sales, A Collection of Essays by Joseph F. Power, O.S.F.S.* (Stella Niagara, NY: 2015) 109–122. On the history of the editions of Francis's correspondence, see Mellinghoff-Bourgerie V., *François de Sales: Un homme de lettres spirituelles*, Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance 330 (Geneva: 1999) 245–267.

133 *Les Œuvres du bien-heureux François de Sales* 1646: 'Mon Dieu, [...] je m'admire tant, que je suis encor si plein de moy-mesme, apres avoir si souvent communie'.

of the Visitation that Francis crafts. On the other, it echoes another emphasis in Francis's sermons: what is seen and contemplated in the Visitation mystery is to be put into practice by responding to the quotidian divine visitations of divine inspirations, the Eucharist, and the needs of the neighbor.¹³⁴ No one models this process better than Francis himself, who, in the view of his contemporaries, 'was a living image upon which the Son of God Our Lord was painted [and] many people [...] when seeing [him], seemed to see Our Lord on earth'.¹³⁵ Not only did Francis write and preach eloquently and insightfully about the dynamics of divine love, but he interiorly appropriated them and became their living embodiment. He is truly the Doctor of Divine Love *par excellence*.

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¹³⁴ See Annecy edition ix 168–169, and x, 65, 72, 75–76. For further development of this topic, see Chorpenning, "Mother of Our Savior and Cooperator in Our Salvation" 80–84.

¹³⁵ Frémyot de Chantal J.-F., *Correspondance*, ed. M.-P. Burns, 6 vols. (Paris: 1986–1996) II 310: 'était une image vivante en laquelle le Fils de Dieu Notre-Seigneur était peint [...] quantité de gens [...] que quand ils voyaient ce Bienheureux, il leur semblait voir Notre-Seigneur en terre'.

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Intimacy and Longing: Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen and the Distance of Love

Henry Luttikhuisen

In one of his most notorious statements, the French post-Freudian philosopher Jacques Lacan defined love as ‘giving what one does not have to someone who does not want it’.¹ Although such an interpretation may have occasional merit, it seems reductive and glib, even by today’s standards. Regardless of its significance for the present, such an understanding would have received little love in late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century Holland, where Augustinian notions of love prevailed. For Saint Augustine and his followers, love is always offered in response. The fourth-century saint based his interpretation upon I *John* 4:19, which says that we love because God first loved us. Rather than giving something that one does not have, one gives because one already possesses the gift of love.² In other words, love is not, as Lacan suggests, driven by a lack that needs to be satisfied; rather, it is generated by excess, by an overflow, by the infinite grace of God.

Within late medieval mysticism, love is typically described as rendering what is far near, and what is near far. Nonetheless, such distance does not necessarily destroy intimacy. Detachment can make the heart grow fonder. It can increase longing. In the Low Countries, mystics, such as Hadewijch, Beatrijs of Nazareth, and Jan van Ruusbroec, often describe their yearning for the divine in terms of the oscillation between ecstasy and alienation found in the *Song of Songs*. The demands of love, it seems, can never be foreclosed. Lovers can never get close enough to one another. Perfect and complete unity remains tantalizingly out of reach. In the mystical bond between God and the beloved soul, there is always more to come. Proximity between lovers need not negate

1 Lacan J., “Seminar XX: Encore (1972–73)”, in Miller J.-A. (ed.), *The Seminars of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore, On Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge*, trans. B. Fink (New York: 1998) 75.

2 St. Augustine, *Confessiones* XIII 9. Cf. Marion J.-L., *Le phénomène érotique* (Paris: 2003), in Lewis S. (trans.), *The Erotic Phenomenon* (Chicago: 2003) 82–89; and Cary P., *Augustine’s Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: 2000) 143–145.

feelings of remoteness.³ In other words, distance is not merely the antithesis of intimacy and belonging, something to be cancelled out by the presence of God. On the contrary, distance can also play a positive or complementary role, encouraging lovers to intensify their desire for one another by pursuing a closer embrace that has yet to be experienced.⁴

This essay will address the spatial dynamics of love as demonstrated in an early painting by Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen, the first Amsterdam painter and printmaker known by name. He may have learned his craft from the Amsterdam Master of the Figdor Deposition or from a Haarlem painter such as Geertgen tot Sint Jans or one of his followers.⁵

In 1507, Jacob Cornelisz produced a picture, now housed in Kassel, of *Noli me tangere*, the event described in *John* 20:17, when the risen Christ commands Mary Magdalene to avoid touching him for he has yet to ascend to the Father [Fig. 15.1].⁶ As Jean-Luc Nancy has noted, this cautionary tale not only calls attention to tactile dangers, it is structured around vision.⁷ Mary Magdalene notices that the stone of the tomb is removed. She recognizes the empty grave. In response, the Magdalene searches for her beloved Lord. Yet when she finds him, the Magdalene initially fails to make him out. The risen Christ appears to her as a common gardener. Only upon hearing the words of Jesus, 'Do not touch me', does she know his true identity and verbally acknowledge him as her Rabbi or Teacher. In Jacob Cornelisz's panel, Jesus holds a spade, indicating his apparent profession. The presence of the tool reveals how Mary Magdalene could have easily mistaken the risen Christ for a gardener. Yet simultaneously,

3 Hollywood A., *The Soul as Virgin Wife: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Marguerite Porete, and Meister Eckhart* (Notre Dame: 1995) 1–25. Hollywood's notion of 'farnessness' derives from the writings of Marguerite Porete, especially *Le Miroir des âmes simples et anéanties et qui seulement demeurent en vouloir et desirer d'amour* (ca. 1300). For more on mystical love in the Low Countries, see McGinn B., "Late Medieval Mystics", in Gavrilyuk P. – Coakley S. (eds.), *The Spiritual Sense: Perceiving God in Western Christianity* (Cambridge: 2012) 190–209; Warnar G., *Ruusbroec: Literature and Mysticism in the Fourteenth Century*, trans. D. Webb (Leiden: 2007); and Wiseman J.A., "Minne in Die Gheestelike Brulocht", in Mommaers P. (ed.), *Jan van Ruusbroec: The Sources, Content, and Sequels of His Mysticism* (Leuven: 1984) 86–99.

4 Ricoeur P., "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation", *Philosophy Today* 17 (1973) 129–141. Marion makes a similar point in *The Erotic Phenomenon* 46–47.

5 Bleyerveld Y. (ed.), *Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen (ca. 1475–1553). De Renaissance in Amsterdam en Alkmaar* [exh. cat., Stedelijk Museum, Alkmaar; Amsterdam Museum] (Zwolle: 2014) 97–98.

6 Ibid. 172–73, cat. 3.

7 Nancy J.-L., "Noli me tangere: Essai sur la levée du corps", in *Noli me tangere: On the Raising of the Body*, trans. S. Clift S. – P.-A. Brault – M. Naas (New York, 2008) 21–26.



FIGURE 15.1 *Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen, Noli me tangere (1507). Oil on panel, 54.5 × 39 cm, Kassel, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel (inv. GK 29).*

IMAGE © GEMÄLDEGALERIE ALTE MEISTER, MUSEUMSLANDSCHAFT HESSEN KASSEL.

the extraordinary diamond-shaped spade seems dysfunctional, reminding beholders that this is no common garden as it calls attention to the lance that pierced Christ's side. Surprisingly, the wounds of Christ's Passion have disappeared from his feet. His body has been completely restored. Christ's directive against touch is inscribed in gold stitching on the hem of his blue robe. The words written in Latin not only decorate Jesus' garment, they also give his utterance greater permanence.

Jacob Cornelisz's highly detailed panel makes the story seem more tangible. The artist's meticulous description carries over into the background. On the upper left, the two remaining Maries visit the empty tomb, where an angel tells them that the crucified Christ has risen from the dead. In response, one of the women offers a prayer of thanksgiving. The other Mary opens her arms in amazement at the news. To the right, the risen Christ appears to the three women returning to inform the apostles of what has transpired (*Matthew* 24:1–10). On the grassy knoll behind these figures, tiny rabbits can be seen. Although it is unlikely that these creatures are there to signify Easter per se, their presence evokes notions of fertility and regeneration. On the upper right, scenes related to Christ's encounter with pilgrims on the road to Emmaus are represented, culminating in the supper celebrated in a chamber below one of the city's tallest towers (*Luke* 24:13–32). The small scale of these vignettes contrasts sharply with Jacob Cornelisz's monumental protagonists in the foreground. His pictorial arrangement marks a dramatic distinction between the significance of related scenes. Furthermore, it also intensifies the isolation of the two main figures, inviting beholders to pay closer attention to their apparent thoughts and actions.

Not surprisingly, the story of *Noli me tangere* is often compared to the tale of the Doubting Thomas. Unlike Mary Magdalene, Saint Thomas is invited to touch Christ's wounds (*John* 20:24–29). Although it is tempting to recognize a double standard for men and women in this regard, such an interpretation would be short sighted. Thomas asks to examine the risen Christ's body in an effort to verify it is truly he who stands before him. He is allowed to touch Jesus in order that he may fully accept the truth of the Resurrection. By contrast, Mary Magdalene is not looking for visual evidence or tactile proof. Rather than seeking knowledge of Christ's identity, she strives for intimacy. Her motivations are grounded in love instead of disbelief. In other words, Thomas struggles to grasp the truth, whereas Mary desires to caress it.

The prohibition of touch in the tale of the Magdalene has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Saint Ambrose of Milan, for instance, suggested that Christ uttered the command because he knew that the Magdalene, preoccupied with

the search for his corpse, was unable to recognize his divinity.⁸ In addition, the fourth-century saint compares the woman's implied desire to touch Christ's body with the original sin of Eve, the taking of forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. Making physical contact with the risen Christ was prohibited, for it gave access to a secret knowledge that belonged solely to God. By obeying his command, a woman, the first person to see the risen Christ, is able to reverse Eve's fall from grace.⁹ In Jacob Cornelisz's painting, Mary Magdalene confronts Christ in an enclosed garden. Their placement within a *hortus conclusus* suggests an Eden-like setting.¹⁰ Although the garden appears less well kept than its surroundings, it includes a variety of flora and grasses. The plants represented are native to the Netherlands, suggesting that the events unfolding are close to hand. Some of the plants depicted also elicit potential symbolic meaning. For instance, the three-leaved wild strawberry in the foreground may suggest the possibility of spiritual love, as it elicits Trinitarian connotations. Yet the absence of fruit, red and full of seeds, seems to remove the plant from more negative associations such as false love and promiscuity, as found in the central panel of Jheronimus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*. In the lower right of the painting, the plantain, which can survive even on a well-trodden path, may allude to the power of humble perseverance, while the nearby dandelion, bitter to taste, may have reminded beholders of the Last Supper and Christ's Passion, more generally. For some viewers, the dandelion may have also conveyed the steadfastness of Jesus' self-sacrifice. Like the sun that rises every day in the East, the dandelion can connote notions of continuity and trust, qualities readily linked to true love. A species of ivy called Charlie's creeper seems to extend the Magdalene's dress, perhaps conveying her resolute desire to cling to her beloved.¹¹

8 St. Ambrose of Milan, *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam*, CCL 14 (Turnhout: 1957) 345–400. Ambrose extends this prohibition to argue his case that women be excluded from the priesthood, on the grounds that they are forbidden to touch the Eucharistic host (that is to say, the Body and Blood of Christ) with their hands.

9 Baert B., "An Odour. A Taste. A Touch. Impossible to Describe: *Noli me tangere* and the Senses", in Boer W. de – Göttler C. (eds.), *Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe*, *Intersections* 26 (Leiden: 2013) 114–115.

10 Bleyerveld, *Jacob van Oostanen* 172–172.

11 For more on flower symbolism, see Falkenburg R., *The Fruit of Devotion: Mysticism and the Imagery of Love in Flemish Paintings of the Virgin and Child, 1450–1550* (Amsterdam: 1994); Levi-d'Ancona M., *The Garden of the Renaissance: Botanical Symbolism in Italian Painting* (Florence: 1977); and Koch R., "Flower Symbolism in the Portinari Altarpiece", *Art Bulletin* 46 (1964) 70–77.

In the guise of a caretaker, Jesus also underscores his role as the New Adam, for like the first man, he is responsible for tending and cultivating the garden. Within this *hortus conclusus*, the presence of Mary Magdalene and Christ, far from connoting temptation or sin, evokes multiple associations with *Song of Songs* 3:1–3 and its portrayal of love. Although the Magdalene is unable to recognize Christ, she continues to look for her beloved Bridegroom, longing for his return.¹² She may not recognize Jesus with bodily eyes, but her love for Christ extends further than the eye can see, for he is already present in her heart.

Saint Augustine offered his own commentary on *Noli me tangere*. To his understanding, Christ's pronouncement is not a disavowal of touch, but a matter of deferment, a recommendation to wait. In *De Trinitate*, Augustine addresses the resurrected Christ's words to the Magdalene twice.¹³ Both references call attention to the limitations of sense experience. As external senses of the body, touch and sight are preoccupied with matters of the flesh and hence, they are of little consequence in regards to loving God. For Augustine, only by turning inward and making use of the spiritual senses are the faithful drawn upward and given opportunities to reconnect with the divine.¹⁴ In "Sermon 246", Augustine suggests:

We touch Christ, you see, by faith, and it is better not to touch him with the hand and to touch him with faith, than to feel him with the hand and not touch him with faith. It was not a great matter to touch Christ; the Jews touched him when they seized him, they touched him when they bound him, touched him when they hung him up; they touched him, and by touching him in a bad way, they lost what they touched. Just you touch by faith, O Catholic Church, see you touch by faith. If you have thought of Christ only as a man, you have touched him on earth. If you have believed Christ is Lord, equal to the Father, then you have touched him when he has ascended to the Father.¹⁵

12 Already in the sixth century, St. Gregory the Great compared Mary Magdalene and the Bride of the Cantic in their persistent search for lost loved ones. For Gregory, these absences make the heart grow fonder; see St. Gregory the Great, *Homilae in Evangelia*, xxv, in *Reading the Gospels with Gregory the Great: Homilies on the Gospels*, 21–26, trans. S. Bhattacharji (Petersham: 2001) 71–90. For more on the medieval reception of the Song of Songs, see Matter E.A., *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia: 1990).

13 St. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, Book 1:18 and Book 4:6.

14 Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self* 63–76.

15 St. Augustine, "Sermon 246", in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, ed. J. Rotelle – trans. E. Hill, *Sermons*, vol. 7 (New York, 1993) 104.

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux offers a similar interpretation. He argues that the prohibition against touch is a matter of deferment: rather than physically touching that which appears ugly and deformed, Bernard encourages his audience to conform to the Magdalene and wait. He asks them to be patient and look forward to the beautifully formed Christ, who is tangible in heaven. Although love may begin in carnality, Bernard believes that it should progress towards the spiritual until one has learned to touch Christ with the mind's eye.¹⁶ In Jacob Cornelisz's panel, Mary Magdalene seems to look with the eyes of her heart. The saint's watery eyes overflow with copious tears, seemingly hindering her outward vision. Nonetheless, the ardent devotion indicates her heartfelt longing to find her beloved. In addition, her posture does not convey any immediate desire to have physical contact with Christ. She kneels in prayer, hoping to reconnect with him spiritually.¹⁷

The Magdalene does not see her master yet. Although he is directly in front of her, Christ remains out of sight. In a posture of prayer, she calls Christ to be more present, to show himself to her. Mary Magdalene can neither turn away nor think of anything else. Consumed by love, she offers her affection with no assurance that her Lord, having died, shall return from the grave. Unlike beholders of the painting, she cannot see the inscription on Christ's garment. Furthermore, the Magdalene has yet to hear his voice. Nonetheless, her devotion is unconditional: she is there for Christ always. Touched by the Holy Spirit, Mary Magdalene maintains her ardent desire to see and touch Christ, now and forever.

Mary Magdalene's exquisite garment, lined with pearls, and her fanciful headdress may allude to her former profession. According to legend, she was a courtesan, who prostituted herself for earthly treasure. Upon her conversion however, the Magdalene gave up her life of sin and devoted herself to loving God.¹⁸ She remains physically attractive, but more importantly, the Magdalene now possesses inner beauty. The unblemished purity of her facial features seems to reveal the cleanliness of her heart.

16 St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum*, 28.10, *Opere di San Bernardo*, ed. J. Leclercq et al., vol. 1 (Milan, 1984) 416. For more on St. Bernard of Clairvaux and the Virgin Mary, see Leclercq J., *Monks on Marriage: A Twelfth Century View* (New York, 1982) 79–105.

17 Cf. Barasch M., *Giotto and the Language of Gesture* (Cambridge, 1987) 169–82.

18 For more on medieval legends concerning Mary Magdalene, see Apostolos-Cappadonna D., *In Search of Mary Magdalene: Images and Traditions* (New York: 2002; Jansen K.L., *The Making of the Magdalene: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: 2000); Haskins S., *Mary Magdalene: Myth and Metaphor* (London: 1993); and Garth H.M., *Saint Mary Magdalene in Medieval Literature* (Baltimore: 1950).

The panel encourages viewers to identify with Mary Magdalene, who has forfeited the worldly ways of sin and now longs for union with Christ. Although she is well-dressed, the female saint focuses her attention exclusively on finding her lover. Nothing else seems to matter. Through the process of her religious conversion, the former prostitute learned to love Jesus farther than the eye could see. She becomes virile, strong in her ardent desire for mystical union with the divine, and pure, cleansed of her sordid past.¹⁹ Mary Magdalene was a popular role model for numerous late medieval female mystics; in this regard, she was surpassed only by the Virgin Mary. The thirteenth-century beguine Hadewijch, for instance, looks to the penitent saint as the ideal lover, strong enough to endure the suffering inherent in a long distance relationship. Alienated by the separation between heaven and earth, Hadewijch frequently feels wounded, overcome by loneliness and despair. Yet she seeks to imitate Mary Magdalene, who is always vigilant in love.²⁰ Julian of Norwich also saw Mary Magdalene as the ideal lover of Christ. The English anchorite even admits to being a bit jealous of the saint, who was able to witness the Passion and see Christ's body with her own eyes.²¹ Late medieval nuns and beguines frequently associated Mary Magdalene with the Bride described in the *Song of Songs*.

Like the Bride, the penitent saint ultimately finds her spiritual lover. Indeed, by spreading the good news to Christ's closest followers, Mary Magdalene came to be called *Apostolorum Apostola*, Apostle to the Apostles.²² In their desire to become more intimate with Christ, medieval imitators of the Magdalene may have advocated self-detachment and contempt for worldly ways, but they also believed that they had a responsibility to share their revelations with others. As Michel de Certeau has noted, the aim of a mystical journey, like pilgrimages in general, was to arrive at a holy site of disappearance, a place where only traces of the divine can be seen, and to rediscover the presence of Christ's love

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- 19 Newman B., *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Philadelphia: 1995) 173–175.
 - 20 Hadewijch, *Mengeldicht* 3:50–80, in *Hadewijch: The Complete Works*, trans. C. Hart (New York: 1980) 322–23. Cf. Baert B., “The Gaze in the Garden: Mary Magdalene in *Noli me tangere*”, in Erhardt M.A. – Morris A. (eds.), *Mary Magdalene: Iconographical Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque* (Leiden: 2012) 205–206.
 - 21 Julian of Norwich, “Showings (Long Text)”, ch. 2, in *Showings*, eds. E. Colledge – J. Walsh (New York, 1978) 177–178. Cf. Coletti T., *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of Saints: Theatre, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: 2004) 7–79.
 - 22 Scholars argue about the date when the term started to be used. By the twelfth century, however, Mary Magdalene was often referred to as the *Apostolorum Apostola*; see Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalene* 62–66.

internally. Like Mary Magdalene, mystics move from the distressing awareness of an empty tomb towards the joyous recognition or 'annunciation' that Christ awaits within the heart of the believer to be reborn.²³

By the fourteenth century, the Franciscan theologian Bonaventure no longer believed with Saint Ambrose that the presence of women as the first to witness the risen Christ signifies the restoration of the divine order lost by Eve's original sin. On the contrary, the primacy of the three Maries was seen as owing to the depth of their love.²⁴ During the late Middle Ages, the cultural status of Mary Magdalene became increasingly complex. According to the thirteenth-century chronicler Jacques de Vitry, he began to have stirrings of lust when he held hands with Marie d'Oignies. At that very moment, the beguine heard a mysterious voice of admonition, saying, 'Do not touch me'. Marie d'Oignies repeated these words to Jacques, who consequently decided to cherish her in faith rather than know her in the flesh.²⁵ Jacques conforms to Mary Magdalene by choosing the chastity of spiritual love over the false joys of lust.

In Jacob Cornelisz's panel, a white alabaster ointment jar with a salmon-colored cap is placed between the mourning woman and the gardener. The container is decorated with geometric patterns and Roman numerals, indicating the date of the painting. Mary Magdalene has brought this item to Christ's sepulcher in anticipation of anointing his body for burial. The presence of the jar, in conjunction with the weeping Magdalene's long hair, would have likely reminded viewers of an earlier episode associated with her life. Throughout the Middle Ages, Mary Magdalene was associated with the repentant sinner who interrupted a meal shared by Christ in the house of Simon the Pharisee.²⁶ According to the narrative, she washed Christ's feet with her tears, wiping them clean with her hair.²⁷ Then, she kissed his feet and anointed them with

23 Certeau M. de, *The Mystical Fable*, trans. M.B. Smith (Chicago: 1992) 79–82.

24 Bonaventure, *Lignum Vitae* III, 34, in *Bonaventure—The Soul's Journey into God, the Tree of Life, the Life of St. Francis*, trans. E. Cousins (New York, 1978) 159–160.

25 Jacques de Vitry, *Vita Maria Oigniacensis*, as cited in Minnis A. – Voaden R., *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition c. 1100–1500* (Turnhout: 2010) 632.

26 St. Gregory the Great is responsible for popularizing the conflation of Mary Magdalene with Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus (*Luke* 10:38–42; *John* 11:1–33), and with the unnamed sinful woman who anoints Christ's feet at the House of Simon (*Luke* 7:36–50). See St. Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia* XXXIII.

27 The Magdalene's long hair, as Barbara Baert suggests, may have also called attention to her future as a hermit; see Baert B., "The Gaze in the Garden" 202. Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostanen later painted another image of Mary Magdalene, which includes a scene of the ascetic saint and her cave at Sainte-Baume: *Mary Magdalene* (1519), oil on panel, 57.8 × 40.6 cm, St. Louis Art Museum.

perfume. However, this is not the only connection with the *Noli me tangere*. In addition, the Pharisee Simon, upon witnessing this event, asked if a prophet would allow himself to be touched by such a woman. In response, Christ stated that those who demonstrate the greatest love will receive the most forgiveness (*Luke* 7:36–50). Although the Magdalene is unable to connect with Jesus through either sight or touch, she is able to share the sense of smell with her Lord through the sweet fragrance potentially emitted from her ointment jar. The vessel, however, is closed tight, suggesting perhaps that she will have to wait to offer her Lord perfume.

In Jacob Cornelisz's painting, Mary Magdalene weeps. She appears to be searching for the visage of Christ through the translucent medium of her tears. The saint's bodily vision is thus impaired. She likely can also feel the tears as they run down her cheeks. Although her tears reveal the intensity of her grief as she looks for her missing Lord, they should not be seen solely to imply sorrow, for as the psalmist states, 'those who sow in tears shall reap in joy' (*Psalms* 125:5).

As Vibeke Olson has noted, late medieval female mystics were prone to cry profusely. Saint Gertrude of Helfta, Saint Dorothy of Montau, Saint Brigitta of Sweden all shed copious tears while contemplating Christ's Passion.²⁸ Although beyond her control, Margery Kempe wept so loudly in church that priests and parishioners complained that she disrupted the liturgy and occasionally wondered if she might be demon possessed. She instead avowed that her copious tears were shed because her suffering was as intense as that of a woman in labour; since her tearful 'labour' kept her from hearing God's word in church, she even prayed, unsuccessfully, for her pangs to cease.²⁹ Like Margery Kemp, Marie d'Oignies could not refrain from crying. Her confessor Jacques de Vitry asked how she could endure to weep continuously, even during periods of fasting. Marie responded that she feasted on her tears, which nourished her soul.³⁰

The shedding of tears does not merely indicate the external character of an atrocious situation and circumstances. On the contrary, it also exposes part of the inner psychology of the person crying.³¹ Already in the fourth century,

28 Olson V., "Woman Why Weepest Thou? Mary Magdalene, The Virgin Mary, and the Transformative Power of Holy Tears in Late Medieval Devotional Painting", in Erhardt M.A. – Morris A. (eds.), *Mary Magdalene: Iconographical Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque* (Leiden: 2012) 377.

29 *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. B.A. Windeatt (New York: 1985).

30 Vitry Jacques de, *The Life of Mary of Oignies* 1:4, as cited in C.W. Bynum C.W., *Holy Feast, Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: 1987) 117–118.

31 Barasch M., "The Crying Face", *Artibus et Historiae* 8 (1987) 36.

Saint Ambrose of Milan noted that tears were not merely the by-product of grief: they readily served as marks of devotion.³² Weeping shows that you care. In his *Dialogues*, Saint Gregory described crying as a gift. The grace of tears (*lacrymarum gratia*) is given to and from God. Gregory describes two kinds of holy tears. First, there are tears of compunction, motivated by remorse for sin. The heartfelt weeping of the penitent indicates the desire to seek forgiveness. Yet the impetus for this tearful prayer is made possible only through grace, which is granted prior to the asking. Second, there are tears of heavenly longing, shed in anticipation of being reunited with the divine. The desire to gain closer proximity with the sacred is also experienced as a response to a divine calling.³³ Tears are, as John of Fécamp puts it, 'suave' for they are 'tears of charity'.³⁴ Instead of merely suggesting loss, such tears allude to the desire to be with God always. As Bernard of Clairvaux suggested, tears, like the waters of baptism, cleanse those who shed them, preparing them to reconnect with Jesus once again.³⁵ Mary Magdalene's tears of longing anticipate that which is to come, namely Christ's triumphant return, the joyous event that will ultimately wipe away her tears.

In Jacob Cornelisz's painting, copious tears flow down Mary Magdalene's face. She makes no effort to dry her eyes. Instead, her hands seem to tremble as she tightly folds her hands and laces her fingers in prayer. The intensity of the Magdalene's desire to cling to Christ is revealed by the dramatic posture of her clasping hands. In her ardent longing, Mary Magdalene begs for his immediate return. She eschews the horror of his absence, which her love of him will not allow her to endure. The prayerful saint searches for Christ's missing body because she is lost without him. Although Mary Magdalene remains painfully unaware of it, she has paradoxically already found him. After all, the Magdalene looks because she holds Christ dearly in her heart; in searching for her lost Lord, she responds to the memory of his loving presence, not yet realizing that he is already present.

Mary Magdalene's abundant tears seem to water the enclosed garden, fostering the luxuriant growth of its plants. Her long flowing hair appears to brush against the verdant flora. Its golden strands echo the grasses springing

32 St. Ambrose of Milan, *De excessu fratris Satyri* 1:10.

33 St. Gregory the Great, *Dialogi III*, trans. O.J. Zimmerman (New York: 1959) 173–174.

34 *Un maître de la vie spirituelle au XI^e siècle: Jean de Fécamp*, eds. J. Leclercq – J.-P. Bonnes (Paris: 1946) 89–93.

35 St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo in octava paschae* 1, in Scott M. (ed.), *Sermons for Lent and the Easter Season*, trans. I. Edmonds (Collegeville: 2013) 181–182. Cf. McGuire B.P., *The Difficult Saint. Bernard of Clairvaux and His Tradition* (Kalamazoo: 1991) 133–151.

up throughout the garden. This visual parallel may allude to the biblical notion that if God is concerned enough to clothe the field, so shall he care even more for the needs of those who love Him (*Matthew* 6:30; *Luke* 12:28). Although Christ holds a spade in his hand, he does not appear to be weeding the garden. Instead, Christ uses the instrument to support himself while focusing his attention on Mary Magdalene.

The grieving woman is frequently depicted with open arms ready to embrace Christ. Although Mary Magdalene's posture reveals her fervent desire to become intimate with Jesus, he typically keeps his distance by making bodily gestures to ward off her advances. In the history of art, these two figures rarely touch one another.³⁶ Yet in Jacob Cornelisz's panel, they do. Christ extends his hand to the praying Magdalene, firmly touching her forehead. His gesture may keep her at bay, but more significantly, it elicits a sense of empathy. Jesus appears to comfort her.³⁷

During the late thirteenth century, Charles II of Anjou and his men unearthed human remains that they identified as belonging to Mary Magdalene. The relics included a skull. A small fragment of skin was found on the forehead, where Christ placed his hand on the female saint as he commanded her to avoid making contact with him. This piece of incorruptible flesh was preserved, it was believed, because it had come into contact with the divine.³⁸

In touching the Magdalene, Jesus seems, at first glance, to violate his own prohibition. After all, one cannot touch without being touched. Although the Magdalene in Jacob Cornelisz's panel appears to be passive, Christ's action can be construed as both reactive and responsive. The weeping woman has touched his heart. By placing his hand on her forehead, Jesus is not only coming into physical contact with the Magdalene, he is also revealing his spiritual desire to offer solace by touching her heart. Christ's gesture is also akin to a priestly act of blessing. His posture seems to offer a benediction before his farewell. Mary Magdalene came to the tomb planning to anoint Christ's corpse

36 Christ also touches the forehead of Mary Magdalene in one of the episodes depicted in Hans Memling, *Joys of Mary* (1480), oil on panel, 81.3 × 189.2 cm, Munich, Alte Pinakothek.

37 For more on the medieval sense of touch, see Jung J., "The Tactile and the Visionary: Notes on the Place of Sculpture in the Medieval Religious Imagination", in Hourihane C. (ed.), *Looking Beyond: Visions, Dreams, and Insights in Medieval Art and History* (Princeton: 2010) 203–240; and Nordenfalk, C., "The Five Senses in Flemish Art before 1600", in Cavalli-Bjorkman G. (ed.), *Netherlandish Mannerism* (Stockholm: 1985) 135–154.

38 Orth M.D., "The Magdalene Shrine of La Sainte-Baume in 1516. A Series of Miniatures by Godefroy le Batabe (B.N. Ms. Fr. 24.955)", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 98 (1981) 201–214.

with myrrh; yet, she is the one who appears to be ultimately blessed in Jacob Cornelisz's painting.³⁹

Recently, it has been suggested that Jacob Cornelisz's *Noli me tangere* may have been commissioned on behalf of Augustinian nuns housed in the Bethaniënklooster, located in what was Amsterdam's red light district. Within such a context, the devotional image may have called fallen women to imitate the Magdalene by changing their ways and by loving Jesus.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, there is no archival evidence to support this hypothesis. The panel could have been exhibited in a domestic setting just as readily. Besides, Mary Magdalene does not merely hold significance for reformed prostitutes and their pastoral caregivers. On the contrary, she is a potentially important saint for anyone yearning to overcome sin or striving to love Christ more fully.

Even though the initial placement of the painting remains unknown, the pictorial arrangement of this devotional image invites beholders to imitate Mary Magdalene. Conformity, it is suggested, will foster greater love. Like the female saint, pious viewers are encouraged to deny worldly desire and pursue mystical union with the divine. Absorbed in their care for one another, neither Christ nor the Magdalene seem to pay attention to the implied presence of observers. Nonetheless, viewers longing to become more intimate with the sacred are invited to continue their search for the divine in hopes of being spiritually touched by Christ, who, although present, appears to be tantalizingly just out of reach.

Sight and touch are deeply intertwined. As the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty has noted, 'Every visible is cut out of the tangible'.⁴¹ Whenever we see something, it appears potentially to be within our reach. In this regard, the seen and the touched belong together. Jacob Cornelisz's panel represents events in the distant past, and yet his meticulous naturalism invites observers to look more closely, to become more intimate with the details of his imagery and with the subject matter that he represents. Like a lover, the painting draws the beholder closer into its world, as it extends the tantalizing promise that there is always something beyond the present, waiting to be seen and touched.

As Jacob Cornelisz's painting suggests, love is not simply a matter of intimacy, but also one of distance. The panel does not merely address the proximity of the sacred, its intimate presence in the here and now. It also calls attention

39 Baert, B., "The Gaze in the Garden" 218–219.

40 This nunnery was also known as Sint Maria Magdalena in Bethaniën; see Bleyerveld (ed.), *Jacob van Oostsanen* 172.

41 Merleau-Ponty M., *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. A. Lingis (Evanston: 1968) 134.

to remoteness, to the separation between the way that the world is and the way it should be, a difference that can only be overcome through the insightful promotion of love touched by grace.

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Amor Dei in Emblems for Dutch Youth

Els Stronks

Profane Images of Love for Dutch Youth

In the Low Countries, the combination ‘youth and love’ produced a powerful and prolific set of images, mostly in the realm of the profane love emblem. This emblematic subgenre came into being in 1601 with the publication of the *Emblemata Amatoria* by Daniël Heinsius. These emblems were soon imitated by Otto Vaenius in his *Amorum Emblemata* (1608). In each of the emblem books modelled after these examples, the imagery of love was further developed and refined, weaving a web of intertextual and inter pictorial references that taught young readers in search of a marriage partner how to feel, behave, and act.¹

In modern scholarship, the profane love imagery of this flourishing genre has frequently been interpreted in light of its social function. Most intriguingly the literary scholar Arie Gelderblom, in a deconstructive analysis, observed that ‘the amorous discourse of early seventeenth-century Dutch love emblems features a strong subtext that conceptualizes love and sex in economic terms.’² Under cover of emblematic images, the youth received advice regarding the choice of a spouse as an investment in long-term happiness.³ The *pictura* of an emblem in Heinsius’s *Ambacht van Cupido* (Cupid’s Works) (1613), entitled ‘Amoris semen mirabile’ (Astonishing seed of love), represents Cupid as a sower. The emblem’s argument is that children are the desired proceeds of profane love [Fig. 16.1]. As Gelderblom contends, analysing the text that accompanies this image, it is to be hoped that children will provide future securement and enlargement of a family’s capital.⁴

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- 1 Bloemendal J., “Love Emblems and a Web of Intertextuality”, in Boot P. – Stronks E. (eds.), *Learned Love. Proceedings of the Emblem Project Utrecht Conference on Dutch Love Emblems and the Internet* (The Hague: 2007) 111–118.
 - 2 Gelderblom A.J., “Investing in Your Relationship”, in Boot – Stronks (eds.), *Learned Love* 131–142, quotation on 142.
 - 3 The songs for Dutch youth show the same patterns of word distribution; see Stronks E., *Invisible Ink. Uncovering Meaning from Texts Using Digital Tools* (Wassenaar: 2015).
 - 4 Gelderblom, “Investing in Your Relationship” 139.



FIGURE 16.1 Daniël Heinsius, *Ambacht van Cupido* (Leiden, Jacob Marcusz.: 1613), 9.
IMAGE © EMBLEM PROJECT UTRECHT.

Religious Images of Love for Dutch Youth

In 1615, the profane love emblem took a religious turn with the publication of Vaenius's *Amoris Divini Emblemata*. The bond between youth and the love emblem was thus immediately broken, as the genre took on a religious, contemplative function and the central theme shifted from 'the search for a marriage partner' to 'making the marriage work'. The religious love emblem's central theme was the spiritual marriage between the believer's soul and Jesus. Even though the believer's soul was often depicted as a young girl, the invitation to contemplate this conjugal union was not directed at young readers. It is telling that in the first *pictura* of this emblematic subgenre, the programmatic opening emblem of Vaenius's *Amoris Divini Emblemata*, the youth is no longer in focus [Fig. 16.2]. As the accompanying poem explains, the reader should interpret Vaenius's image to represent divine love being addressed to a human being's soul ['Godts liefde spreekt tot s'menschen ziele'].⁵ The age-neutral

5 Vaenius O., *Amoris Divini Emblemata* (Antwerp, Joannes Meursius: 1615) 10.

DIVINI AMORIS. II



B 2

FIGURE 16.2 Otto Vaenius, *Amoris Divini Emblemata* (Antwerp, Joannes Meursius: 1615), 11.
IMAGE © EMBLEM PROJECT UTRECHT.

‘mensch’ is used to invoke an audience clearly distinct from the implied young readers of the profane love emblems.

In the religious love emblems modelled after Vaenius’s *Amoris Divini Emblemata*, the frequent references to the reader as a bride awaiting her groom Jesus perhaps induced older readers to forget their real age. One could



FIGURE 16.3 *Jan Luyken, Pictura 37. Jan Luyken, Jesus en de ziel (Amsterdam, Pieter Arentsz.: 1685), 159.*

IMAGE © EMBLEM PROJECT UTRECHT.

read these emblems as an invitation to return to the time in one's life when the search for a marriage partner was the primary concern. Jan Luyken's *Jesus en de ziel* (1678) (Jesus and the soul) explicitly provides such an opportunity: the human soul is shown as a woman who is about as old as Jesus. The two figures hold an image of the human heart, on which is inscribed 'Jesus' to underpin the religious essence of their relationship [Fig. 16.3].

Luyken is the exception, though. Most religious love emblems focus intensely on the older (and wiser) believer. In a Dutch adaptation of Herman Hugo's *Pia Desideria* (Pious Wishes) (1624) by Jan Suderman, for instance, an emblem opens with a few lines in which the older believer looks back on a life of misery [Fig. 16.4].

Myn leven is vergaen in nare droefenis,
 En alle myne jaren
 In smerten heen gevaren.
 't Is my genoeg nu Hy alleen myn leven is;⁶

The lyric 'I' proclaims: Life has gone by in dreadful sadness, years have passed by in misery. But at this old age, the presence of God offers me consolation.

In my contribution to this volume, I aim to shed light on Luyken's exceptional religious love emblems that were geared towards a young audience. Young readers were most likely the target of *Jesus en de ziel*, and they certainly represented the intended audience for the final emblem book Luyken published, *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* (Man's birth, life and death), first printed in 1712,⁷ in which he addresses 'Jonge Dochtertjes en Knaapjes' (young girls and boys) in his preface.⁸ Although he provides no exact age range for this group, Luyken's choice of words and his *picturae* suggest that he regarded these emblems to be especially suitable for children up to the age of young adulthood.

As I will argue, Luyken's religious emblems for children contain images presenting a complex set of ideas, especially with regard to the ambiguous concept of 'Amor Dei'—either 'God's love for me' or 'my love for God'.⁹ The loving relationship between God and the believer was first articulated as 'Amor Dei' by Augustine in Christianity, who often compared 'Amor Dei' with conjugal love. But Augustine was particularly fond of making the comparison with paternal love, prompted by the two biblical passages in which a father's disciplining of his son was regarded and even advocated as a token of paternal love (Proverbs 3:12 and Hebrews 12:6).¹⁰

6 Suderman J., *De godlievende ziel* (Amsterdam, Henrik Wetstein: 1724) 16.

7 This contribution is inspired by the BA thesis of Clazien van den Berg (Utrecht University) on Luyken's *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* and the Enlightenment.

8 Luyken J., 'Voorreden' in *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* (Amsterdam, wed. Pieter Arentz.: 1712) vii.

9 Bellusci D.C., *Amor Dei in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Amsterdam: 2013) 1.

10 Augustine frequently quoted these two biblical passages. See Traninger A., "Anger Management and the Rhetoric of Authenticity in Montaigne's *De la colère*", in Enenkel



FIGURE 16.4 Jan Suderman, *De godlievende ziel* (Amsterdam, Henrik Wetstein: 1724), 16.
IMAGE © EMBLEM PROJECT UTRECHT.

In early modern emblematic imagery, this biblical lesson was taught through scenes of a father beating his child or children. In an emblem book made by the monk Franciscus Lijftocht, it is explained that when two sibling children fight—due to their sinful natures—their father should beat them [Fig. 16.5].¹¹ During the seventeenth century, children and young adults were persistently represented in emblems in ways that reminded adults that they were sinful at birth, and thus in need of correction—in line with current pedagogical views, which eventually were slowly replaced by the Enlightenment ideology that regarded the child as a *tabula rasa*.¹² In Jan Davids's *Occasio Arrepta*, for instance, with etchings by Theodoor Galle, young people are present in six out of the twelve illustrations: 'Um darzulegen, daß die Entscheidung für Gott und Böse bereits in der Jugend fällt' (to demonstrate that the choice between God and evil is already made in one's youth), as Anne Buschhoff has maintained.¹³

In Luyken's *Het leerzaam huisraad* (The Instructing Furnishings) dating from 1711, young children are depicted in this traditional manner. While a young boy watches from outside, a mother rocks her baby to sleep in a cradle. The accompanying poem warns adult readers not to fall asleep like the baby, which means not to live their lives like an ignorant infant unaware of its duties: in their final hours, these dim-witted adults will realize it is too late to make amends [Fig. 16.6].

Deception hides there.

As the child's mind,
So that Sleep overcomes it,
Is, through a steady to and fro,
Drawn to calmness,
As it comes to rest,
And restlessness is turned around:

K.A.E. – Traninger A., *Discourses of Anger in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: 2015) 97–125, especially 113.

11 Franciscus Lijftocht was an Augustian monk. For more biographical information, see Frederiks J.G. – Van den Branden J., *Biographisch woordenboek der Noord- en Zuidnederlandsche letterkunde* (Amsterdam: 1888–1891) 470.

12 An idea expressed in, for instance, Desiderius Erasmus, *De pueris instituendis* (On a liberal education for children), first published in 1529. This idea was gradually replaced by the views of John Locke and later Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who regarded the child as a *tabula rasa*; see, for instance, Cunningham H., *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (London and New York: 2014).

13 Buschhoff A., *Die Liebesemblematis des Otto van Veen* (Bremen: 2004) 147.

Likewise someone rocks steadily,
 To deceive the old child
 Through a constant pastime;
 So that the mind does not awaken
 For the greatest and heaviest tasks,
 But acts as if they are unimportant.
 Thus all his time escapes him,
 With dreaming and slumbering!,
 And he remains the ignorant child;
 Who thoughtless and ill-advised,
 Doesn't get around to manly deeds,
 Until life's End finds him.
 Then he is frightened on the soft bed,
 And wishes to save himself from the Cradle,
 And do the work of Old Age;
 But, since his Hourglass has run out,
 He must pay with his life,
 Therefore one must realize this in time.¹⁴

A first peek at one of the emblems in *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* shows how Luyken diverged from the existing emblematic tradition of depicting children as weak vessels who depend on paternal correction. We see a mother threatening to beat a child [Fig. 16.7]. The accompanying motto and epigram first addresses the adults, instructing them to beat the children if and when necessary:

't Is beter dat de Vriendschap slaat,
 Als dat de Vyand vriend'lyk praat.

14 Luyken, J., *Het leerzaam huisraad* (Amsterdam, wed. Pieter Arentz.: 1711) 111–112. Translation by Josephine V. Brown, with editorial assistance from William G. Stryker, see Pitts Theological Library, Digital Image Archive, <http://pitts.emory.edu/dia/detail.cfm?ID=117057>. The Dutch original reads: 'Gelyk de kinderlyke zinne,/ Op dat de Slaap haar overwinne,/ Door een geduurig heen en weêr,/ Getrokken werden tot bedaaren,/ Dewyl zy daar by een vergaaren,/ Op dat men zo de Onrust keer:/ Zo zit'er een gestaâg te wiege,/ Op dat hy 't oude kind bedriege/ Door een geduurig tydverdryf;/ Zo dat de zinnen niet en waaken,/ Op d'allergrootste en zwaarste zaaken,/ Maar doen, 't geen weinig heeft om 't lyf./ Op dat hem al zyn tyd ontginge,/ Met droomery en sluimeringe,/ En dat hy blyf, 't onweetend kind;/ Dat onbedacht en onberaaden,/ Niet komt tot mannelyke daaden,/ Tot hem het Eind des levens vind./ Dan schrikt hy op het zachte bedde,/ n wenst zich uit de Wieg te redde,/ En 't werk van Ouderdom te doen;/ Doch, wyl zyn Uurglas is verloopen,/ Zo moet hy 't met de dood bekoopen,/ Dies moet men dit by tyds bevroên.'



FIGURE 16.5 *Franciscus Lijftocht*, Voorwinckel van patientie in den droeven tegenspoedt (Emmerich, Gaspar Bouttats: 1679), 29.
IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.301411>.



FIGURE 16.6 *Jan Luyken, De wieg, 1711.*

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, RP-P-1896-A-19368-2867.

Als 't Kindje stout is, moet het lyden,
 Dat hem zyn Ouderen kastyden,
 Doch dat geschied hem niet uit haat;
 Gelyk het oude kind moet draagen,
 Des Heeren hand van liefde slagen,
 Op dat het niet verderft in 't quaad.¹⁵

15 Luyken, *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* 43. 'It's better that Friendship strikes,/ Than that the Enemy speaks kindly./ When the little Child is naughty, he must suffer,/ Being chastised by his Parents,/ But that doesn't happen out of hate;/ Likewise the old child



FIGURE 16.7 *Jan Luyken, Des menschen begin, midden en einde (Amsterdam, Wed. Pieter Arentsz II and Cornelis van der Sys: 1712), 43.*

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM RP-P-1896-A-19368-2889.

But, innovatively, the poem then sheds light on how the young reader should perceive this punishment. A naughty child should interpret the chastisement as a token of love—as does ‘the old child’, the adult, who has learnt to

must accept,/ That the Lord's hand strikes out of love,/ So that he is not corrupted by evil.' Translation by Josephine V. Brown, with editorial assistance from William G. Stryker.

appreciate God's loving, corrective strokes as something positive. Luyken's poem cites Hebrews 12:6 (itself a quote from Proverbs):

Want dien de Heere lief heeft, kastyd hy: en hy geesseld eenen iegelyken
zoone dien hy aanneemt.¹⁶

Luyken's biblical hermeneutics thus appear traditional, but by depicting and approaching the young child as a learning individual rather than as someone who deserves or needs the father's beating, he alters the traditional emblematic application of the biblical verse. He also widens this verse's scope by writing of parental rather than exclusively paternal love. The relationship between child and parents—and, as made explicit by the *pictura*, not just that of child and father—is on display and under inspection in his emblems.

On a closer look, something else is new: the connection between early modern discourses on divine love and those on friendship. See, for instance, the emblem's motto: 't Is beter dat de Vriendschap slaat,/ Als dat de Vyand vriend'lyk praat.' (It is better to have friendship beat you than to have sweet-talking enemies).¹⁷ The preface to these emblems also makes this link—the young reader is instructed to look upon God as a close friend: 'Maar onze zoete lieven Heertje,/ Dat is u allerbeste vriend' (Our sweet little Lord, however, is your very best friend).¹⁸ The diminutive 'Heertje' indicates the close relationship between the young believer and God that this emblem book aims to help establish. The punishment's friendly nature also appears to be present in the mother figure's facial expression in Luyken's *pictura* [Figs. 16.8 & 16.9]. Administering the beating, the mum smiles as the child looks frightened. This gives us a first impression of the face of 'Amor Dei' in Luyken's emblems: if the mum represents God's love and the child the believer, then God's love has a friendly appearance and the believer's love for God a respectful or even a frightened face.

As previously noticed by other researchers, Luyken made little adjustments to his style—which is one of deceptive simplicity—in *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* to suit his young audience.¹⁹ He depicts and describes daily

16 Luyken, *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* 42.

17 On friendship in the Dutch Republic, see Kooijmans L., *Vriendschap en de kunst van het overleven in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: 1997).

18 Luyken, *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* vii.

19 See for instance Gelderblom A.J., "Who were Jan Luyken's readers?", in Dekoninck R. – Guiderdoni-Bruslé A. (eds.), *Emblemata Sacra. The Rhetoric and Hermeneutics of Illustrated Sacred Discourse* (Turnhout: 2007) 499–507.



FIGURE 16.8

Detail Jan Luyken, Des menschen begin, midden en einde (Amsterdam, Wed. Pieter Arentsz II and Cornelis van der Sys: 1712), 43.

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM,
RP-P-1896-A-19368-2889.



FIGURE 16.9

Detail Jan Luyken, Des menschen begin, midden en einde (Amsterdam, Wed. Pieter Arentsz II and Cornelis van der Sys: 1712), 43.

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM,
RP-P-1896-A-19368-2889

events and habits, but does so in a sophisticated manner, constructing new meaning from images, scripture, and poetry. In this way he is rather demanding of his young readers. He presupposes that they connect visual and textual modalities to grasp the emblem's full meaning. When adaptations of Luyken's emblems were made by Petronella Moens and Willem Hendrik Warnsinck a century later, in 1824, they removed all mottoes, as they were perceived to be 'onverstaanbaar' (incomprehensible). They also took out Luyken's biblical quotes because they were deemed 'onverkieslijk' (inappropriate) for a young audience.²⁰ Luyken's approach was thus criticized, but it had nevertheless

20 Moens P. – Warnsinck W.H., *'s Menschen begin, midden en einde. Met illustraties van J.H. Warnsinck en J. van Meurs* (Amsterdam: 1824) iv and v.

been successful. He had founded a new subgenre of religious emblems for children that blossomed at the end of the eighteenth century.²¹ At the end of this contribution, I will demonstrate how the most famous early modern writer of Dutch children's books, Hieronymus van Alphen, deviated from Luyken's example to further enrich the pictorial tradition of religious love emblems.

I will now discuss the two dominant traditions of visual representations of the early modern concept of 'Amor Dei'—derived from Augustine and Vaenius—to chart how Luyken's emblems related to existing conceptual frameworks. I will argue that Luyken diverged from traditional conceptualizations by choosing parental and not conjugal love as a central metaphor, and by representing 'Amor Dei' through images of divine love that opened up a new way of building the relationship between God and the believer.

Augustine's and Vaenius's Visual Representations of 'Amor Dei'

Augustine's ideas on 'Amor Dei' were part of his larger theories of human and divine love, in which he made the distinction between love for the world and love for God ('*Duo sunt amores, mundi et Dei*'),²² and also between love of oneself ('*amor sui*') and love of God ('*amor dei*').²³ The capacity to love is given to us by the Holy Spirit, Augustine maintains.²⁴ One of the leading scholars of Augustine's concept of 'Amor Dei', John Burnaby, understood this concept to be the very essence of Augustine's belief,²⁵ based on passages in Augustine's *Confessiones* such as the following:

With you as my guide I entered into my innermost citadel, and was given the power to do so because you had become my helper. [...] The person who knows the truth knows it, and he who knows it knows eternity.

21 Luyken's popularity is also demonstrated by the separate prints of his *picturae* that were made; see, for instance, the collection of the Rijksmuseum, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.147733>.

22 Quoted in Stroh W., "De Dei et mundi amore. Jacob Baldes Emblemsammlung in ihren theologischen und literarischen Traditionen", in Lukas V. – Stroh W. – Wiener C. (eds.), *Christus und Cupido. Embleme aus Jacob Baldes Poetenklasse von 1628* (Regensburg: 2012) 1–26, especially 3.

23 Stroh, "De Dei et mundi amore" 4.

24 Bavel T.J. van, "Love", in Fitzgerald A.D., *Augustine through the Ages. An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids – Cambridge: 1999) 511–512 and 514.

25 Burnaby J., *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine. With a foreword by Oliver O'Donovan* (Eugene: 2007) 6.

Love knows it. Eternal truth and true love and beloved eternity: you are my God.

CONFESSIONES, 7.10.16²⁶

The scholarly debates—led by not only Burnaby but also Hannah Arendt²⁷ and Oliver O'Donovan²⁸—focus on the exact relationship among the objects of love (God, body, self, and the other) described by Augustine.²⁹ I will leave these debates aside and only point to David C. Bellusci's *Amor Dei in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, which discusses how Augustine's ideas remained crucial throughout the early modern period. Augustine's ideas, for instance, were given a very distinctive and more rational meaning in Baruch Spinoza's '*amor dei intellectualis*'.³⁰ Whether Luyken was affected by Spinoza's ideas—a contemporary and compatriot—is another matter that I have to leave aside, for the judgement of the specialists is still out on this matter.³¹

A line of art-historical research relevant to the analysis of Luyken's emblems is the strand that connects Augustine's opposition of 'Amor Dei' and 'amor sui' with his opposition of the two *civitates*. The art historian Jan Emmens introduced this idea after studying unexplained antitheses in Joachim Beuckelaer's *Market scene with Ecce Homo*. His theory was later supported by Reindert Falkenburg, who provided additional proof:

He [Emmens] explained the selling of meat, fish and poultry in a market place on the one hand and the *Ecce Homo* scene on the other as an antithesis between the *amor sui* of those who live the life of the flesh and worldly desires, and the *amor Dei*, to which the Passion scene in the background directs the attention of the beholder. He related this antithesis between *amor sui* and *amor Dei* to the concept of the two citizenships defined by St. Augustine in his *De Civitate Dei*, where the citizenship

26 Quoted through Kenney J.P., "Mystic and Monk. Augustine and the Spiritual Life" in Vessey M. – Reid S. (eds.), *A Companion to Augustine* (Chichester: 2012) 284–296, quotation on p. 289. As Kenney explains, Augustine's ideas derive from Plato.

27 Arendt H., *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustinus. Versuch einer philosophischen Interpretation* (Berlin: 1929).

28 O'Donovan O., *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (New Haven – London: 1980).

29 Bellusci, *Amor Dei* 21.

30 Melamed Y., "Spinoza's Amor Dei Intellectualis" in Zauderer-Naaman N., *Descartes, Spinoza and the Emotions* (Cambridge: forthcoming).

31 In the introduction to his anthology, Hylkema assumes such a connection. See Hylkema C.B., *Stichtelijke verzen van Jan Luyken* (Zaandam: 1904) i–xiv.

of the world—the *civitas terrena*—is opposed to the citizenship of the Kingdom of heaven—the *civitas Dei*.³²

As Emmens and Falkenburg contend, many metaphors are used to visualize this opposition,³³ including that of the pilgrim, who departs from the sinful world because its inhabitants care only for earthly goods.³⁴ The wandering figure in the background of the scene in Luyken's emblem with the beaten child seems to be an example of precisely this visual metaphor [Fig. 16.10].

Yet its presence cannot stand as proof or evidence that Luyken's emblems are rooted in Augustinian imagery. For this visual metaphor is characteristic of much of Luyken's later work, which, as Henk van 't Veld has maintained, was inspired by Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.³⁵ In 1687, Luyken crafted the title page for a Dutch translation of this book [Fig. 16.11]. Van 't Veld posits no correlation between Augustine and Luyken's work,³⁶ but the two men definitely shared the idea that divine love is central to human faith.³⁷ In the short biography of Luyken that precedes the *Des menschen begin, midden en einde*, his faith and more particularly his conversion are explicitly framed as signs of God's love. When Luyken was twenty-six, the Lord had entered his heart and had taught him—through punishment and with arguments—that the lifestyle he was following would not grant him access to heaven, which is given only to those who love God. Even though he realized that the road to heaven would be narrow and full of danger, Luyken, enflamed by the love of God, decided to change his way of life then and there.³⁸

32 Falkenburg R.L., "Iconographical connections between Antwerp landscapes, market scenes and kitchen pieces, 1500–1580", *Oud Holland—Quarterly for Dutch Art History* 102, 2 (1988) 114–126, quotation on 114.

33 Falkenburg, "Iconographical connections" 124.

34 Falkenburg, "Iconographical connections" 122.

35 Veld H. van 't, *Bemide broeders die ik vand op 's werelts pelgrims wegen. Jan Luyken (1649–1712) als illustrator en medereiziger van John Bunyan (1628–1688)* (Utrecht: 2000).

36 Augustine is mentioned in one single footnote in Van 't Veld, *Bemide broeders*.

37 Price R., "Love" in Pollmann K. and others (eds.), *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine* (Oxford: 2013) vol. 3, 1325–1330.

38 Luyken, *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* xv and xvi: 'In 't 26. Jaar zyns Ouderdoms, is hem de HEERE op een krachtdaadige wys aan zyn herte verscheenen; hem met veel overtuiging en bestraffing nagaande, en toonende dat het burgerlyke leven niet genoeg was om een Erfgenaam te worden, van een onverderfelyke en onverwelkelyke erfenis, die weg geleid is voor de geene die God lief hebben, (a) maar dat'er moet gestreeden worden (b) om in te gaan dewyl de poort eng en de weg smal is, die ten leven leid. Waar op hy vuurig door de Liefde Gods onsteeken zynde, rezolveerde om een geheel andere manier van leven te leiden'.



FIGURE 16.10 *Detail Jan Luyken, Des menschen begin, midden en einde (Amsterdam, Wed. Pieter Arentsz II and Cornelis van der Sys: 1712), 43.*

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, RP-P-1896-A-19368-2889.



FIGURE 16.11 Jan Luyken, Title page of John Bunyan, *Eens Christens reyse na de eeuwighheyt* (Amsterdam, Johannes Boekholt: 1686).
IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM.

The second tradition of visualizing 'Amor Dei' relevant to the analysis of Luyken's emblems derives from religious love emblems and early modern spiritual prints. As Anne Buschhoff has established, Vaenius was the first to introduce the pair of 'amor divinus' and the personification of the human soul, 'anima', into the realm of the emblem.³⁹ In his *Amoris Divini Emblemata*, Vaenius gave the profane love emblems a religious twist, as Walter Melion has argued, to emphasize the continuum of love from the earthly to its most spiritual equivalent.⁴⁰ This continuum echoes Augustine's ideas, and references to Augustine are indeed present throughout Vaenius's *Amoris Divini Emblemata*. The image of the lover's heart being pierced by an arrow of divine love, for instance, is found both in Augustine and Vaenius.⁴¹

As for Vaenius, 'Amor Dei' means 'love of God' as well as 'love for God'.⁴² Central to Vaenius's religious imagery is the childlike figure of an angel, which, as Nathalie de Brézé has argued, 'can be perceived as the double of Amor Divinus'.⁴³ De Brézé and Buschhoff agree that Vaenius demonstrates the effects of divine love on the human soul as well as the effects of human love on the divine:

Vaenius illustrates [...] the different stages of the action of the divine love on the soul (*via purgativa, via illuminativa, via unitiva, via inferna*). [...] the path of the soul to heaven or God is a metaphor for life on earth where men, through their choices, can achieve mystical union. This device illustrates perfectly the meditative function proper to emblem books on divine love, where the process of visualization uses empathy to help the reader identify himself with *Anima*.⁴⁴

39 Buschhoff, *Die Liebesemblemantik des Otto van Veen* 131–171. In tracing the origins of this motif, Buschhoff investigates not only precursors in Netherlandish print production (Goltzius/Matham/Wierix) but also the medieval tradition of bride-mysticism.

40 Melion W.S., "Venus/Venius: On the Artistic Identity of Otto Vaenius and his Doctrine of the Image" in McKeown S. (ed.), *Otto Vaenius and his Emblem Books*, *Glasgow Emblem Studies* 15 (Glasgow: 2012) 1–53.

41 Buschhoff, *Die Liebesemblemantik des Otto van Veen* 162.

42 Buschhoff, *Die Liebesemblemantik des Otto van Veen* 252.

43 Brézé N. de, "Picturing the Soul, Living and Departed" in Melion W.S. – Rothstein B. – Weemans M. (eds.), *The Anthropomorphic Lens: Anthropomorphism, Microcosmism and Analogy in Early Modern Thought and the Visual Arts* (Leiden: 2014) 119–144, quotation on 139.

44 Brézé N. de, "Picturing the Soul" 158.



FIGURE 16.12 Lucas van Leyden, 'Maria with child', ca. 1514.

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM RIJKSMUSEUM.

The choices De Brézé refers to are, on the one hand, the decision to devote oneself to God and, on the other hand, the resolve to focus on leading a virtuous life.

Although he was the first to use this imagery in an emblematic setting, Vaenius was certainly not the inventor of this type of imagery. An angel-like figure representing *amor divinus* appeared on title pages of books published in Antwerp around the same time and was omnipresent in contemporary Catholic print production. As Buschhoff has maintained, Vaenius's representation of *amor divinus* was embedded in this visual tradition but was also influenced by another tradition that grew in popularity from the sixteenth century onwards—that of depicting Jesus as a child. Buschhoff refers to a particular print by Lucas van Leyden as the starting point of this tradition in the Low Countries [Fig. 16.12].⁴⁵

45 Buschhoff, *Die Liebesemblematik des Otto van Veen* 170–175. See also Müller Hofstede J., *Otto van Veen: Der Lehrer des P.P. Rubens* (Freiburg im Breisgau: 1959) 48–50.



FIGURE 16.13 *Otto Vaenius, Amoris divini emblemata (Antwerp, Joannes Meursius: 1615), 13.*
 IMAGE © EMBLEM PROJECT UTRECHT.

A third tradition relevant here was the habit of representing Jesus as a young adult, as Luyken did throughout *Jesus en de ziel* and Vaenius did occasionally in *Amoris Divini Emblemata* [Fig. 16.13]. This tradition appears to have gained ground at the end of the seventeenth century, for it pervades prints such as this one by Bernard Picart [Fig. 16.14].



FIGURE 16.14 Bernard Picart, *La Poësie Chretienne animée par l'Amour Divin*, 1713.
IMAGE © RIJKMUSEUM [http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001](http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.300757)
.COLLECT.300757.

So when Vaenius's readers saw Vaenius's *amor divinus*, Buschhoff argues, they activated their knowledge of visualizations of Cupid, of angels, of Jesus both as a child and a young adult.⁴⁶ This rich spectrum offered a whole range of opportunities for Luyken.

Luyken's and the Visual Traditions

Armed with these basic insights into Augustinian opposites and the emblematic tradition that visualized *amor divinus*, we can now explore how the concept 'Amor Dei' was represented and shaped by Luyken's imagery. At first sight, Luyken appears to have worked within existing visual traditions. In one of his emblems, we see a young boy walking on the street, guided by two angels who walk with him and three angels who look down on him from heaven. This scene is complemented by wandering, pilgrim-like figures in the background [Fig. 16.15]. The accompanying poem reads:

Het Kind moet Gehoorzaam zyn.
 Gelyk, gezelt zich, by gelyk;
 Deugd, lokt de Vreugd, van 't Hemelryk.
 Die de Engelen Gezel wil weezen,
 Moet onzen Lieven Heere vreezen,
 En leeven in gehoorzaamheid;
 Geen Ondeugd leeren op de straaten,
 Maar alles doen, en alles laaten,
 Wat Vader, en wat Moeder zeid.⁴⁷

These angels represent not *amor divinus* but the young believer's ideal of becoming their companion. To reach this ideal state, the child should 'fear'—meaning obey—the Lord and listen to both his father and mother.

As this emblem demonstrates, Luyken transforms the existing emblematic allegorical tradition by using this emblematic imagery to explain not how (divine) love works but how children should behave to make the love of God grow. Both father and mother are included in the child's learning model. In making

46 Buschhoff, *Die Liebesemblemantik des Otto van Veen* 158.

47 Luyken, *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* 61. 'He who wishes to be the Angels' Companion,/ Must fear our Dear Lord,/ And live in obedience;/ Not learn Mischief on the streets,/ But do all and refrain from all,/ That Father and that Mother said.' Translation by Josephine V. Brown, with editorial assistance from William G. Stryker.



FIGURE 16.15 Jan Luyken, *Pictura Des menschen begin, midden en einde*, as reproduced in print sheet.

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.147733>.

these emblems, Luyken often applied imagery from the profane and religious love emblematics. I will discuss three telling examples, the first derived from Heinsius's *Ambacht van Cupido*. In 1613, Heinsius used the image of Cupid playing with a whipping top in the emblem 'Vapulando sustentor' (Spinning by beating) to argue that love causes disagreeable yet necessary pain. Without it, we would lose hope and life without hope is not worth living [Fig. 16.16].

Die ons noch hopen doet al ist dat wy niet vvinnen.
En leven sonder hoop, wat sal de minne sijn?



FIGURE 16.16 Daniel Heinsius, *Ambacht van Cupido* (Amsterdam: 1613), 10.

IMAGE © EMBLEM PROJECT UTRECHT.

Luyken's 'De Dryftol' (The Top) was doubtless inspired by Heinsius's example, for Luyken uses the exact same image to explain how pain, the human heart, and (divine) love are intertwined [Fig. 16.17].

De Dryftol, door de zweep gedreeven,
 Werd onderhouden by zyn leven:
 Zo ook, het menschelyke hert,
 Door naerstigheid van veele slagen,
 Die dryven tot Gods welbehaagen,
 Op dat het niet, als dood en werd.⁴⁸

48 Luyken, *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* 61. 'The Whipping-top, driven by the whip,/Is supported during its life:/ So likewise the human heart,/Through the persistence of many strikes,/ Driven for God's approval,/ So that it does not die.' Translation by Josephine V. Brown, with editorial assistance from William G. Stryker.



FIGURE 16.17 Jan Luyken, *Pictura Des menschen begin, midden en einde*.
 IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.147733>.

The top spins because of being whipped. In a similar manner, the human heart should be driven towards God by persistent whipping that keeps it alive.

Human efforts like these are, as another of Luyken's emblems argues, complemented by the efforts of the caring, loving God. The relationship between the young believer and God's love is captured in an image taken from Hugo's *Pia Desideria*. The child is supported by a walker; the inviting gestures of *amor divinus* stimulate it to try to walk [Fig. 16.18].



FIGURE 16.18 Boetius a Bolswert, *Pictura Herman Hugo, Pia Desideria*, as reproduced in print sheet, ca. 1590.

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM RP-P-BI-2234.



FIGURE 16.19 Jan Luyken, *Pictura Des menschen begin, midden en einde*.

IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.147733>.

Amor divinus is replaced by figures of the mother and father in Luyken's 'De Loopwagen' (The Walker). The child is facing the reader, not walking towards its parents but moving independently of them [Fig. 16.19].

Dus moet het Kindje leeren gaan,
 Wyl 't op zyn voetjes niet kan staan:
 Zo onderschraagd ons ook de Heere;
 Op dat wy, als een zwak gestel,
 Niet vallen zouden in de Hel,
 Maar zo den gang ten Hemel leeren.⁴⁹

49 Luyken, *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* 11. 'Thus the little child must learn to walk,/ As on his little feet he cannot stand:/In this way the Lord also supports us:/ So that we,



FIGURE 16.20 Otto Vaenius, *Amorum emblemata* (Antwerp, Joannes Meursius: 1608), 83.

IMAGE © EMBLEM PROJECT UTRECHT.

The father's pointing finger underscores the image's message. This is how a child, helped by a walker, should learn how to move unsupported. In a similar manner, we should all walk towards heaven with the support of God. The emblem also appears to express the promise that once one arrives in heaven, such support is no longer necessary: for then one no longer risks tumbling into the pitfall of Hell.

The most fundamental change made by Luyken is his presentation of love no longer as an uncontrollable, untameable force (as the Petrarchan profane love emblems did) but as a power that humans can use to their benefit. In an emblem by Vaenius imitated by Luyken, it is explained how nothing and no one can withstand love [Fig. 16.20].

as a weak being,/ Should not fall into Hell,/ But learn the way to Heaven.' Translation by Josephine V. Brown, with editorial assistance from William G. Stryker.



FIGURE 16.21 *Jan Luyken, Pictura Des menschen begin, midden en einde.*
 IMAGE © RIJKSMUSEUM, [http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001](http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.147733)
 .COLLECT.147733.

Gheen yser, ofte stael de Liefd' en kan beletten
 Te schieten 't gheen hy wil, gheen helm, of schilt en baet
 Den trotsen oorloghs-man, dat hij zijn cracht ontgaet.
 Al wat op aerden leeft, dwinght Liefde met zijn wetten.

The harness stops the swift arrows, but nothing defends him against the weapons of quivered Amor. Whom Amor hits with his swift pointed weapon, he

controls.⁵⁰ In Luyken's emblem, the same image of the bow and arrow symbolizes the power of the heart [Fig. 16.21].

Elk rekt (als 't Kind) zyn spanning uit,
 En schiet, na 't geen, dat niet beduid:
 Maar and'ren, die wat meer beoogen,
 Die schieten (om een groote vrucht)
 Na God, met eene scherpe zucht,
 Van haar gespannen herte Boogen.⁵¹

We are all capable of shooting an arrow. But whoever manages to tighten the heart like the string of a bow aims at God and all that He entails. The playing children are being observed by two men and not by their parents—again showing how independently children should operate in their search for a relationship with God.

The shared goal is to become one of God's children. In the emblem 'Het Kindje gevallen' (The Little Child Fallen) Luyken underlines the role of friendship and trust in this process. Adults and children alike should look upon God as a helping friend, who always will be there with a helping hand when they fall: 'ô God, wat hebt gy onze Ziel/Die in haar loop zo dikmaals viel/Ook menigmaal de hand gegeven' (O God, how did you support our soul, that so often stumbled and fell, with a helping hand).⁵²

Conclusion

In Luyken's emblems, both the love of God and the love for God are represented by images of daily events and objects that should be read in an allegorical, emblematic manner. The emblematic serves as a means of identification:

50 Based on the translation given at the site of the Emblem Project Utrecht: http://emblems.let.uu.nl/v1608012.html#note_v160801211_tr_en.

51 Luyken, *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* 48. 'Everyone (like the Child) stretches his tension,/And shoots at what's without meaning:/ But others, who aim for something more,/ They shoot (for a great fruit)/ At God, with a keen desire,/ From their taut Heart-Bows.' Translation by Josephine V. Brown, with editorial assistance from William G. Stryker.

52 Luyken, *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* 25. 'O God, How thou hast our Soul/ That in her course so often fell,/ Also often given a hand. Translation by Josephine V. Brown, with editorial assistance from William G. Stryker.

young and old readers alike can relate to the image by identifying with the roles, deeds, and emotions depicted in Luyken's images. The relationship between God and the believer is compared not to a marriage but to the loving relationship between parents and their children.

The images intend to teach how 'Amor Dei' can be used to successfully seek the ultimate goal of Heaven; adults are to regard the child's capacity to learn as exemplary. At about the same time Luyken worked on his *Des menschen begin, midden en einde*, Madame de Guyon also dwelled upon the emblematic role children play for adults. In the preface to her emblem book, *L'Ame Amante de son Dieu*, De Guyon wrote: 'l'ame qui veut entrer & perseverer dans la communication avec Dieu & son divin Amour, doit être douée des aimables & enfantines qualités d'innocence, de simplicité, de pureté, de desappropriation, de candeur, de benignité, de docilité & de flexibilité à se laisser conduire & gouverner à Dieu comme un petit enfant, sans répugnance, sans présomption, sans fierté, sans malice, sans fraude & sans duplicité de cœur'.⁵³ To De Guyon, children are emblematic in their innocence. In contrast, Luyken argues that they are emblematic in their learning capabilities. Parents and children have distinct roles in *Des menschen begin, midden en einde*, but they share the responsibility of seeking a heart-to-heart conversation with God.

For the young reader, Luyken's emblems contain the complicated message that a relationship with God should be built using daily experiences as tokens of his friendly love. This message was often simplified in emblems modelled after Luyken's example. I have mentioned Moens and Warnsinck, but would also like to point to the opening emblem of the most famous and most popular of all early modern Dutch books for children, Hieronymus van Alphen's *Gedigten voor jonge kinderen* (Poems for young children).⁵⁴ The opening emblem thematizes 'Amor Dei' [Fig. 16.22].

Ik ben een kind,
Van God bemind,
En tot geluk geschapen.
Zijn liefde is groot;

53 Madame de Guyon, *L'Ame Amante de son Dieu* (Cologne, J. de la Pierre: 1717) xxiii. "The soul that hopes to be in communication with God and His love, should have the qualities of a young child (being innocent, curious, pure, simple, candid, docile and sincere, without any reluctance, self-conceit, vanity, mischief and bigotry.' See also Buschhoff, *Die Liebesemblematis des Otto van Veen* 178.

54 This booklet was first published in 1778 without illustrations, but with the illustrations, it came to possess all the characteristics of an emblem book.



FIGURE 16.22 Hieronymus van Alphen, *Kleine gedigten voor kinderen* (Utrecht, Van Veen: 1783), 6.

IMAGE © ROYAL LIBRARY, THE HAGUE.

'k Heb speelgoed, kleedren, melk en brood,
Een wieg om in te slapen.⁵⁵

The poem reads: 'I am a child, loved by God, born for happiness, His love is great.' Then, in the fifth line, the reader's attention is rather abruptly turned towards to the child's earthly belongings: clothes, toys, food, and a bed, all representations of God's love. Whereas Luyken urges even his young readers to look away from the world—most significantly via the pilgrims who show us that one should leave the world behind and look for other, divine realities—Van Alphen invites them to look upon earthly goods as proof of God's kindness. 'Amor Dei' thus becomes a given, not a *desideratum*, in Van Alphen's *Kleine gedigten voor kinderen*. Intriguingly, Luyken's emblems are both a help and guide for young readers, explaining how they are to obtain this *desideratum*. The only catch is that they need to acquire the ability to decipher Luyken's emblematic lessons to be able to obtain what they might want. Such learning was more than likely a family affair: reading *Des menschen begin, midden en einde* together with one's parents was probably the only way young readers could acquire the skills needed to make good use of Luyken's emblems. And Luyken, in fact, anticipated such use by including role models and instructions for the parents of his young readers.

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55 Alphen H. van, *Kleine gedigten voor kinderen* (Utrecht, Wed. J. van Terveen: 1783).

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PART 7

Desire, Fellowship, and Marian Mimesis



Marten de Vos and the Virgin Mary: Love, Mimesis and Music

Margit Thöfner

During his active career, which spanned some forty years, the Antwerp painter Marten de Vos (1532–1603) was fascinated by the pictorial possibilities generated by the loving, familial relationship between the Virgin Mary and Christ. This is evident in many of his works.

Consider, for example, the altarpiece he painted in 1569 as part of a prestigious commission to decorate a chapel for the Lutheran Dukes of Braunschweig-Lüneburg [Fig. 17.1].¹ Here De Vos sets up an extraordinarily close relationship between the Virgin, Christ and St John. The apostle looks longingly up at the dying Christ, whose head is inclined in his direction. At the same time, John has his hand on the swooning Virgin's bosom. It is a gesture simultaneously indicative, protective and caressing, recalling one particular moment in the Passion:

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her into his own home.

JOHN 19:26–27

In his love for both, Christ draws John and Mary into a new familial relationship, as son and mother.

At the same time, at this point in the pictorial narrative Jesus expands his natal family outwards so that it may stand for his followers, ultimately for the Church, defined as the loving fellowship of Christians. Moreover, in De Vos's painting, John's gesture underscores Mary's specific role in that fellowship, her maternity, the generative powers of her body. That is a point also made in the Gospels, in passages such as:

1 On this commission, see Zweite A., *Marten de Vos als Maler* (Berlin: 1980) 118–146; and Bock B., *Bilder mit Bedeutung: Lutherische Theologie um 1570 in der Ausstattung der Celler Schlosskapelle* (Celle: 2009).

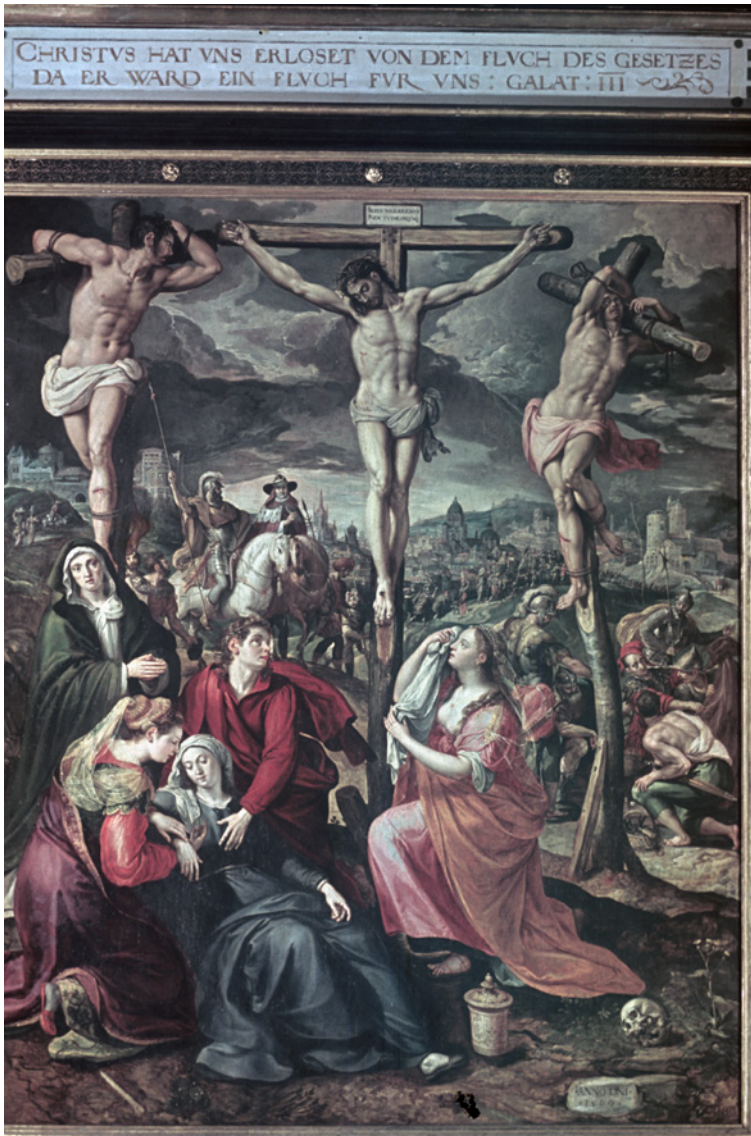


FIGURE 17.1 *Marten de Vos, Crucifixion, part of a triptych for the Palatine chapel in Celle (1569). Oil on panel, 190 × 153 cm.*
SCHLOSSKAPELLE, CELLE.

[...] a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

LUKE 11:27

It is these paps, or breasts, that John touches, drawing attention to Mary's motherhood and her consequent suffering under the Cross for the love of her son.

It may seem strange that an image with such concentration on Mary could serve as the focal point for Lutheran worship and, furthermore, that it was by an artist with known reformist sympathies. At least in 1585 De Vos would officially declare himself Lutheran and, well before that date, he had received important commissions from both Calvinist and Lutheran patrons.² But, unlike Calvinism, early modern Lutheranism was not iconoclastic, in some ways quite the opposite.³ Moreover, of all the reformers, Martin Luther had the most positive attitude to Mary. He saw her as the exemplary Christian, a model for all believers in humility, faith, maternal care and, crucially for the purposes of the present argument, love of God. Certainly, for Luther Mary had no intercessory powers, but it was acceptable and indeed desirable for the faithful to imitate her example.⁴ Maria-mimesis was embedded in sixteenth-century Lutheranism and, at least for De Vos, this had important artistic consequences.

De Vos remained interested in the relationship between Christ and Mary throughout his long career. Towards the end—when he was a Roman Catholic, if perhaps only outwardly—De Vos was commissioned to paint the central panel for the altarpiece of the Antwerp St. Luke's guild [Fig. 17.2].⁵ This remarkably rich and complex work of art has already received some scholarly attention but there is scope for further analysis.⁶ It is also about the love between Christ and the Virgin and its expansion outwards, here to include St. Luke the painter and, by extension, the whole St. Luke's guild.

The Infant Christ is nestled in his mother's lap. Delicately she embraces him without actually touching his skin, as if to underscore his palpable humanity and his unreachable Divinity. Yet the relationship between mother and child

² Zweite, *Marten de Vos als Maler* 26.

³ See, for example, the various essays in Fritz J.M. (ed.), *Die bewahrende Kraft des Luthertums: Mittelalterliche Kunstwerke in evangelischen Kirchen* (Regensburg: 1997); and Spicer A. (ed.), *Lutheran Churches in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham – Burlington: 2012).

⁴ See Heal B., *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in early modern Germany: Protestant and Catholic Piety, 1500–1648* (Cambridge: 2007) 56–63.

⁵ There is clear evidence that De Vos's initial conversion was pragmatic. See Zweite, *Marten de Vos als Maler* 27, note 41.

⁶ See, for example, the intelligent but relatively short discussions in Vegelin van Claerbergen E., *Rebuilding Reality: Three Guild Altarpieces by Marten de Vos for Post-iconoclasm Antwerp* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, London: 1999) 156–159; Filedt Kok J.P., *De Heilige Lucas tekent en schildert de Madonna* (Amsterdam: 2006); Verstegen I., "Between Presence and Perspective: the Portrait-in-a-Picture in Early Modern Painting", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 71.4 (2008) 513–526; and Jonckheere K., *Antwerp Art after Iconoclasm: Experiments in Decorum* (Brussels: 2012) 222–224.



FIGURE 17.2 *Marten de Vos, St. Luke painting the Virgin, part of a triptych for the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk in Antwerp (1602). Oil on panel, 270 × 217 cm.*

KONINKLIJK MUSEUM VOOR SCHONE KUNSTEN, ANTWERP.

is most clearly articulated in the bunches of grapes. Mary displays hers over her stomach, exactly between her lap and her breasts. This alludes to another biblical passage lauding Mary: 'Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb' (*Luke 1:42*). The phrase is, of course, also part of the

Hail Mary, one of the core prayers within Roman Catholic devotional practices. Again De Vos underscores Mary's fertility, the physical nature of her motherhood, whilst also preserving a sense of Christ's Divinity. At the same time, the child offers his grapes to St. Luke, as if to invite him into the familial circle. Moreover, as this is an altarpiece, the grapes are replete with Eucharistic and other Christological allusions. And, finally, the grapes are in the process of being painted. They bring to mind Pliny's story of Zeuxis and Parrhasios, the birds, the grapes and the curtain, one of the core narratives used to convey the powers of painterly mimesis in early modern art and art theory.⁷

As this suggests, and as is patently evident from the act of portrait painting, the issue of Maria-mimesis is as central to De Vos's St. Luke altarpiece as is the Virgin's motherhood, the model for Christian familial love. The two are drawn into a tightly entwined metaphor for, and justification of, the very act of painting. The painter, St. Luke, becomes a Christian Zeuxis, portraying not merely grapes but rather the fruit of Mary's womb, the result of her maternal work, the Incarnate Godhead. As is well known, within the less iconoclastic branches of Christianity such as Lutheranism it is the physicality of Christ—his being Mary's son—that legitimates his portrayal, his painterly imitation.⁸ That is because Mary's motherhood is, in itself, an act of bodying forth the Divine, of rendering it visible. As such, imitating her maternal labours is a form of sacred licence for devotional artistic work. Evidently, there are good reasons why De Vos was so deeply engaged with the physical and loving bond between Christ and Mary. It was no less than the bedrock on which rested his work as an ambitious Christian painter.

Much of this is conventional, the kind of claims made by most medieval and early modern images of St. Luke painting the Virgin and Child.⁹ But there are some interesting subtleties to De Vos's image. As the rest of this essay will show, these grew out of the artist's long and thoughtful engagement with the idea of Christian fellowship, rooted in his specific duties as a senior member and erstwhile Dean of the Antwerp St. Luke's guild and also in his own familial experiences.

7 For a helpful discussion of this, see Ebert-Schifferer S., "Trompe l'Oeil: The Underestimated Trick", in Ebert-Schifferer S. (ed.), *Deceptions and Illusions: Five Centuries of Trompe l'Oeil Painting* (Washington: 2002) 17–37.

8 For a useful overview of the image debate as it took place in sixteenth-century Antwerp, see Jonckheere, *Antwerp Art after Iconoclasm* 31–42. For the argument that it is Christ's humanity that makes his portrayal legitimate, see especially 36–39.

9 Verstegan, "Between Presence and Perspective" 517–518.

Art and Music in Early Modern Antwerp

De Vos's guild altarpiece reprises a number of ideas already articulated in two prints on which he collaborated at a crucial point in his career, spanning the years 1584 and 1585. Most of what follows will focus on these, with particular emphasis on the first.

This particular print, from 1584, has a similar composition to the St. Luke painting, revolving around three central figures [Fig. 17.3]. There is also the bunch of grapes, here held just below Mary's bosom, and the pose of the Infant Christ in the painting is a reversal of that in the print. Yet the closest parallel is the group of seven chubby child-angels or *putti* inhabiting the upper realm. In early modern Antwerp such angels came with a double valence. They were celestial beings and also *amorini* or cupids, little loves.¹⁰ In De Vos's two images, they are closely linked with the Christ Child seated below, both through their nakedness and infantine body shapes. He, too, is a little love. Yet again, De Vos seems particularly engaged with Christian love.

Crucially, in the print from 1584, the seven angels are reading and making music [Fig. 17.5]. Here, then, artistic work rooted in the loving relationship between Mary, Christ and the faithful is given a further dimension, through polyphonic song. Why was this done? And what does it divulge about being a prominent and ambitious artist in Antwerp in the last and tumultuous third of the sixteenth century?

To begin to answer these questions it is necessary first to sketch out something of the print's genesis and context. As already suggested, it was a collaboration by a team of three, with De Vos serving as the pictorial specialist. An inscription on the left of the print declares that the initial idea came from his long-standing business partner, Jan Sadeler I, who also engraved the plate [Fig. 17.4]. No particular patron or dedicatee appears to have been involved, though the print certainly catered to a particular audience, of which more below. Instead, the print seems to have been a speculative endeavour, the first in a series of eight to be published by Sadeler over the following decade or so. Each of these eight prints combined sacred text with advanced polyphonic music and beautifully designed and engraved imagery; five were designed by De Vos.¹¹

10 See, for example, Thøfner M., *A Common Art: Urban Ceremonial in Antwerp and Brussels during and after the Dutch Revolt* (Zwolle: 2007) 221.

11 For a helpful overview of this series, see Vignau-Wilbert T., "Bildmotteten und Motettenbilder", in Härting U. (ed.), *Himmelschöre und Höllenkrach—Musizierende Engel und Dämonen* (Hamm: 2006) 53–57. Many thanks to Ursula Härting for drawing this short but useful essay to my attention.



FIGURE 17.3 *Jan Sadeler I after Marten de Vos and Cornelis Verdonck, Ave gratia plena (1584). Copperplate engraving on paper; 25.7 × 19.5 cm. RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.*

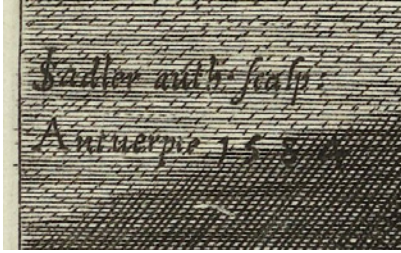


FIGURE 17.4

Detail of Jan Sadeler I's signature, fig. 17.3.

FIGURE 17.5 *Detail of music, fig. 17.3.*

According to Cornelis de Bie (albeit writing nearly eighty years later) Sadeler was an accomplished singer and a connoisseur of music. Perhaps he invented this type of print to combine his two favourite art forms.¹² Here it is also worth noting that, in terms of religion, Sadeler appears to have had early connections with the Reformed or Calvinist church but, after he moved to Cologne around 1579, he was probably equally exposed to Lutheran thinking. Like De Vos, later in life Sadeler seems to have become an outwardly conforming Roman Catholic although, like many Antwerp artists of his generation, this may have been a matter of pragmatism as much as of conviction.¹³

12 De Bie Cornelis, *Het Gulden Cabinet van de edel vry Schilder Const* (Antwerp, Ian Meyssens: 1661) 462–464.

13 This assessment of Sadeler's religious life is based on the *Oxford Art Online* entry on the artist: <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.ueaezproxy.uea.ac.uk:2048/subscriber/article/grove/art/T074900pg1#T074901>, last accessed 27 September 2016.



FIGURE 17.6

Detail of Marten de Vos's signature, fig. 17.3.

Interestingly, in the 1584 print De Vos is named as the painter of the image, not as the inventor, the usual term for a designer [Fig. 17.6]. And there is further evidence to suggest that the three central figures were originally composed for a painting, either an epitaph or altarpiece which is no longer extant.¹⁴ The original, however, does not seem to have included angels or musical notation. Moreover, by 1584 Sadeler was relatively settled in Germany so De Vos may have sent him a drawing, an adaptation of his original painting to fit its new purpose.¹⁵ Or the printer may have returned to Antwerp, a place he would repeatedly visit, and thus could work directly with his two collaborators. Certainly, his signature specifically anchors the print in that city [Fig. 17.4].

The musical parts were by Sadeler's friend Cornelis Verdonck, a promising young composer of twenty-one [Fig. 17.7]. Verdonck had spent much of his life in the household of Cornelis Pruenen, a prominent Antwerp citizen, city council member and erstwhile treasurer. Pruenen was a known music-lover, with links to other Antwerp composers and music publishers, including, for example, the Protestant sympathiser Hubert Waelrant.¹⁶ In 1580 Verdonck became a pupil of Séverin Cornet, the well-regarded *kapelmeester* at the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk in Antwerp. Yet the following year, after the Calvinist

14 This takes the form of a drawing in red chalk in an album by Pieter van Lint dated sometime before 1626, now in the Institut Néerlandais in Paris. This drawing sketchily but unmistakably reprises the central composition, but the background is different, there is a throne with a canopy but neither music nor angels. The sketch comes straight after certain other drawings made in the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk in Antwerp, so it may be that the painting hung there at that date. The drawing is catalogued as being after an unidentified painting in Vlieghe H., "De leerpraktijk van een jonge schilder: Het notitieboekje van Pieter van Lint in het Institut Néerlandais te Parijs", *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen* 26 (1979) 249–279, esp. 269.

15 Vignau-Wilbert, "Bildmotteten und Motettenbilder" 53.

16 On Waelrant see the relevant entry in *Oxford Music Online*: http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ueaezproxy.uea.ac.uk:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/29759?q=Waelrant&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit, last accessed 27 September 2016. Waelrant dedicated a collation of music entitled *Symphonia Angelica* to Pruenen in 1594.



FIGURE 17.7

Detail of Cornelis Verdonck's signature, fig. 17.3.

takeover of the city government, Cornet lost his job and by April 1582 he was dead.¹⁷ Nothing is known about Verdonck's religious orientation but, given his master's sad fate, he may not have been particularly sympathetic to radical Protestantism. This is further supported by the distinct possibility that the pictorial parts of the 1584 print began life as a religious painting. So Verdonck may well have composed his motet in response to a sacred picture, which is not an approach easily associated with a committed Calvinist or Anabaptist. What can be said with certainty is that the three collaborators who worked together on the print each came with advanced expertise, and that their various skills are underscored in the three signatures.

De Vos's specific task seems to have been to develop his original painting into a pictorial format to fit Sadeler's original idea and Verdonck's music. Thus the project was in itself a performance of fellowship, combining three distinct voices. Sadeler sang well, Verdonck was obviously a person of considerable musicality and, for reasons explained below, De Vos himself may also have had some experience of polyphonic singing. It is tempting to imagine the three trying out the new motet together with the help of a fourth friend.¹⁸

17 Verdonck's biographical details are based on the relevant entry in *Oxford Music Online*: http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ueaezproxy.uea.ac.uk:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/29196?q=Cornelis+verdonck&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit, last accessed 27 September 2016. Those regarding Cornet are from his entry: http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ueaezproxy.uea.ac.uk:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/06512?q=Severin+Cornet&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit, last accessed 27 September 2016.

18 That early modern artists might think of singing or performing together as a metaphor for artistic interdependence may be inferred from the musicians in Paolo Veronese's

In any case, it is not surprising to find such a collaboration in early modern Antwerp. The St. Luke's guild—of which De Vos was an active member, serving, amongst other things, as sub-dean in 1571 and dean in 1572—was more than a painters' guild.¹⁹ It included other creative trades such as printmakers and publishers, amongst them a highly active group of music printers.²⁰ There were also makers of musical instruments like the staunchly Roman Catholic Ruckers family, organ builders and virginal and harpsichord makers of European-wide renown.²¹ That De Vos worked directly with this grouping is borne out by an Antwerp probate inventory from 1623, showing that he and his son Daniel collaborated on the decoration of fine harpsichords.²² Unfortunately none seems to survive. But the custom of decorating keyboard instruments with scenes of dalliance is another testimonial to the close relationship between love, art and music in early modern Antwerp [Fig. 17.8]. Against this background it becomes clear that the print from 1584 stages a kind of collaboration facilitated by the St. Luke's guild. By combining music, painting and printing, the image performs the idea of Christian fraternity.

Here it is important to note that Antwerp had become a crucial centre for music publishing by the 1580s. The city was pivotal in the craze for multi-vocal madrigal singing that swept northern Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These madrigals were often set to Italian texts on the vicissitudes of love, frequently drawn from authors such as Petrarch.²³ The Antwerp printers of music both capitalised on and further propagated this particular musical phenomenon. In keeping with this, Verdonck is best known for providing the

Wedding at Cana from 1562, now in the Louvre, if those musicians are indeed a set of artists' portraits, as argued already in 1674 by Marco Boschini; see Zamperini A., *Paolo Veronese* (London: 2014). De Vos seems to have spent time in Venice, so he may have been aware of such notions, although he was back in Antwerp when Veronese painted his great piece; see Limentana Viridis C., "Martin de Vos e la cultura veneziana", *Antichità Viva* 16.2 (1977) 3–14.

19 Zweite, *Marten de Vos als Maler* 24.

20 On the guild's history and membership, see Rombouts P. – van Lierus T., *De Liggeren en andere Historische Archiven der Antwerpsche Sint Lucasgilde* (Amsterdam: 1961) viii–xiv. The surviving archivalia for 1571 and 1572, when de Vos was first subdean and then dean, also give a helpful sense of the diverse membership (243–249).

21 O'Brien G., *Ruckers: A Harpsichord and Virginal Building Tradition* (Cambridge: 1990).

22 Zweite, *Marten de Vos als Maler* 30, note 62.

23 Hoekstra G.R., "The Reception and Cultivation of the Italian Madrigal in Antwerp and the Low Countries, 1555–1620", *Musica Disciplina* 48 (1994) 125–187.



FIGURE 17.8 *Hans Ruckers the Elder and unknown painter, "Double Virginals" (1581). Wood, metal and oil paint, 49.5 × 182.2 cm. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, NEW YORK.*

musical setting for one of the first English madrigals ever published. His main output was mostly secular, and much of it in the form of love songs.²⁴

On a simple level, then, Sadeler, De Vos and Verdonck collaborated because they could, and because such collaborations were facilitated by the St Luke's guild. At the same time, they knew well that there was a market for such prints in Antwerp and beyond, as evinced by the craze for madrigals. More broadly, the ability to read music and to sing well was part and parcel of middle and upper class sociability in early modern Europe. Music was one of the seven liberal arts, studied in the quadrivium by anybody who went to university.²⁵ So the musical notation on the print might seem esoteric to modern eyes. But in the early

24 http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ueaezproxy.uea.ac.uk:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/29196?q=Verdonck&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit, last accessed 27 September 2016.

25 A good sense of the complexity and extent of musical life in the early modern Netherlands may be gained from Forney K.K., "The Netherlands: 1520–1640", in Haar J. (ed.), *European Music: 1520–1640* (Woodbridge: 2006) 246–279.

modern period it was legible to the vast majority of the social elite, to those who either were or aspired to be 'persons of quality', for example individuals like Verdonck's patron Pruenen. Therefore, the music in the print voices social and intellectual ambition, both for the three makers and for their audiences.

That said, making such a print was still a strange thing to do in 1584. At this point Antwerp was a self-governing Calvinist city republic heavily besieged by pro-Catholic Habsburg troops under the command of Alessandro Farnese, governor-general of the Low Countries for Philip II of Spain. Already in 1581, in what is usually known as the silent iconoclasm, religious imagery had been purged from most of the city's churches.²⁶ The church choirs had also been disbanded, including the famous performers from the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk and their *kapelmeester*, Verdonck's master; moreover, the famous Antwerp organs were now silent during worship, some of them damaged. In keeping with Calvinist practice, the only music permitted in church was congregational, univocal singing of the metrical Psalms.²⁷

De Vos must have been painfully aware of what this meant for the musicians, and not just because of his connection with Verdonck. De Vos's brother Laurent had been a boy chorister at the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk in Antwerp before, in 1566, he became the choirmaster of Cambrai cathedral.²⁸ This was a position of considerable prominence, for Cambrai had one of the most famous choirs in northern Europe, from which singers were regularly recruited for the Sistine chapel in Rome.²⁹ By 1577 Laurent was choirmaster at St Martin's in Ypres, returning to his old post in Cambrai in 1580. But the city was now under a pro-Orangist government with Calvinist leanings. Laurent fell foul of the new authorities by composing a motet for large choir, setting to music a set of biblical passages which were deemed critical of the powers-that-be. Denied due legal process, he was hung on the town hall square in January 1582, a martyr for his art.³⁰

26 Jonckheere, *Antwerp Art after Iconoclasm* 27.

27 Huh P.J., "John Calvin and the Presbyterian Psalter", *Liturgy* 27.3 (2012) 16–22.

28 See the relevant entry in *Oxford Music Online*: http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ueaezproxy.uea.ac.uk:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/29694?q=Laurent+de+Vos&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit, last accessed 27 September 2016. My warm thanks to Professor Andrew Spicer for drawing Laurent de Vos to my attention, for sharing sources on him, and also for many years of scholarly friendship.

29 Wright R.C. – Bridgman N., "Musiciens à la cathédrale de Cambrai 1475–1550", *Revue de Musicologie* 62.2 (1976) 204–228; and Wright C., "Performance Practices at the Cathedral of Cambrai, 1475–1550", *The Musical Quarterly* 64.3 (1978) 295–328.

30 Vander Straeten E., *La Musique au Pays-Bas avant le XIX^e siècle: documents inédits et annotés*, vol. 1 (Brussels: 1867) 157–160; and Try C. de, *Notice Historique sur la Maîtrise de Cambrai* (Caen: 1851) 6.

Before he was silenced Laurent de Vos would have taught and sung the complex polyphonic compositions expected to subtend Divine worship in major Flemish churches by the mid-sixteenth century.³¹ His brother, the painter, may therefore have had an amateur engagement with such music. By 1584 Marten would most likely have felt sorrow yet also quiet pride in his brother's achievements and patent courage and, because of this, considerable sympathy for young musicians like Verdonck, whose future prospects were undoubtedly threatened by the Calvinist moratorium on complex music in church.

In this context the print, with its musical notation, should surely be understood as a kind of protest, an emphatic commitment to two art forms—image-making and polyphonic music—which under Calvinist rule were no longer considered appropriate for the promotion of Christianity. As such, the image was a defence of all that De Vos himself, his brother and the Antwerp St. Luke's guild stood for: painting, printing and music-making within a setting of Christian fraternity. It is a defence of the very idea of sacred art and its practitioners.

Ave Gratia Plena

The print by Sadeler, De Vos and Verdonck is highly sophisticated, with a tight and thoughtful integration of text, music and image [Fig. 17.3].³² As in an emblem, the three distinct aspects are mutually elucidatory and enriching, making the whole much more than the sum of its parts. Given this, it is difficult to account exhaustively for the print, so what follows concentrates on a few salient aspects only.

In 1584 this print was wholly innovative in its combination of fully functioning musical notation and carefully designed religious imagery. Even so, on one level, it emulates an engraving produced in Antwerp in 1563 by Baltasar Bos after a painting by Frans Floris, which originally came with two musical passages [Fig. 17.9]. In the print, however, there is only one and the music has been drastically simplified; in the print by De Vos, Sadeler and Verdonck that is not

31 An excellent sense of this may be had from Forney K.K., "Music, Ritual and Patronage at the Church of Our Lady, Antwerp", *Early Music History* 7 (1987) 1–57.

32 Schuckman C., *Hollstein's Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450–1700: Maarten de Vos, Volume XLIV: Text* (Rotterdam: 1996) 154; and Vignau-Wilbert, "Bildmotteten und Motettenbilder" 53.



FIGURE 17.9 *Baltasar Bos after Frans Floris, The Awakening of the Arts (1563). Copperplate engraving on paper, 42.5 × 57.9 cm.*
ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD.

the case.³³ Nor is their print like a medieval or early modern musical manuscript where the imagery is often marginal, ancillary to the music.³⁴ In De Vos's design that relationship is partially reversed. The music is at the upper edge yet not exactly marginal. The surrounding cloud curves downward, towards the

33 Many thanks to Edward Wouk for drawing this to my attention; see Wouk E., *The New Hollstein Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts 1450–1700: Frans Floris, Part II* (Ouderkerk aan den IJssel: 2011) 156–157.

34 This is of course an over-simplification for the sake of brevity. On the potentially very rich relationship between a medieval musical manuscript and its illumination, see Oliver J.H., "Sounds and Visions of Heaven: The Fusion of Music and Art in the Gradual of Gisela von Kerssenbroeck", in Boynton S. – Reilly D.J. (eds.), *Resounding Images: Medieval Intersections of Art, Music and Sound, Studies in the Visual Cultures of the Middle Ages 7* (Turnhout: 2015) 237–250.

Christ Child, who responds to it with his upward gesture. Evidently, the musical notation is intrinsic to the composition.

Despite its innovative nature this print has not been considered in depth by art historians, but it is quite well-known amongst musicologists.³⁵ That is because it is the first example of engraved mensural notation ever produced in Europe—mensural notation meaning that it indicates rhythm as well as melody.³⁶ Normally in this period, music was set as letterpress, not engraved, in part because it was much easier to correct mistakes. So, simply in terms of the detail and quality of the musical notation, the print is a marked innovation as well as a virtuoso engraving performance. The notation is precise and eminently legible.

This is, in fact, the only known version of Verdonck's motet and it can be—and has been—transcribed into modern notation and performed [Figs. 17.10 & 17.11].³⁷ The notation is not an abstract evocation of sound. It allows for, even solicits, performance. That is partly because the motet is a relatively simple piece for four voices, within reach of good amateur singers, yet unusually presented. In the early modern period, polyphonic music was normally published as part books, one version for each singer, not as something approaching a score, which is the case here.³⁸ Moreover, given the size of the print, roughly a quarter of a folio, it would hardly be comfortable for four people to sing from it together. Instead the print would either have to be circulated amongst four individuals, who could learn each voice off by heart—again, a fairly simple task for an experienced singer, even if only a competent amateur—or one would have to generate four individual parts, possibly by hand. So the print is a result of collaboration, and it solicits collaboration. Sacred art is here an invitation to perform community in Christian fellowship

That idea is, of course, embedded in the very idea of polyphonic song. It is not possible to sing a harmony alone. There has to be more than one voice. Moreover, singing based on musical notation is both a cerebral and a highly

35 Vignau-Wilbert, "Bildmotteten und Motettenbilder" 53. In the same volume, Vignau-Wilbert provides a catalogue entry for this print with useful bibliographical information (135–136).

36 http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ueaezproxy.uea.ac.uk:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/20114pg7?q=Mensural+notation&search=quick&pos=3&_start=1#firsthit, last accessed 27 September 2016.

37 A recording of the motet may be found at <http://www.hemony.nl/hemony/muziekfragmenten>, last accessed 27 September 2016.

38 Boorman S., "Early Music Printing: Working for a Specialized Market", in Tyson G.T. – Wagonheim S.S. (eds.), *Print and Culture in the Renaissance: Essays on the Advent of Printing* (Newark – London – Toronto: 1986) 222–245.

Ave gratia plena

Cornelius Verdonck
(1563-1625)

The musical score is written for four voices: Cantus [Alto], Altus [Tenor I], Tenor [Tenor II], and Bassus [Bass]. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are in Latin, and the score is divided into four systems of music, each with a measure number (5, 11, 15) at the beginning.

System 1 (Measures 1-4):

A - ve gra - ti - a ple - -

System 2 (Measures 5-8):

na, Do - mi - nus te - cum, be - ne - di - cta tu

System 3 (Measures 9-12):

in mu - li - e - - ri - bus,

System 4 (Measures 13-16):

be - ne - di - cta tu in - ter mu - li - e - res, in - ter

FIGURE 17.10 *Cornelius Verdonck, "Ave gratia plena", first page of modern transcription by Edward Tambling (http://www.cpd.org/wiki/images/5/58/Verdonck_-_Ave_gratia_plena.pdf, last accessed 27 September 2016).*

2

20

mu - li - e - res, et be - ne - di -

mu - li - e - res, et be - ne - di -

ter mu - li - e - res, et be - ne - di -

et be - ne - di -

24

ctus fru - ctus ven - tris tu - i, fru - ctus -

ctus fru - ctus ven - tris tu - i, fru - ctus ven -

ctus fru - ctus ven - tris tu - i,

ctus fru - ctus ven - tris tu - i, fru - ctus

27

ven - tris tu - i.

tris tu - i.

fru - ctus ven - tris tu - i.

ven - tris tu - i.

FIGURE 17.11 Cornelis Verdonck, "Ave gratia plena", second page of modern transcription by Edward Tambling (http://www.cpdL.org/wiki/images/5/58/Verdonck_-_Ave_gratia_plena.pdf; last accessed 27 September 2016).

embodied activity. One must read the music, transform it into vocal performance and, in that performance, one must listen carefully to the other voices to keep the harmonic structure in order. It engages the whole person in a communal effort.

That is not to say that the music in the 1584 print is necessarily for performance, but this is one choice open to its intended elite audiences. The four voices may also be read by sight alone, as if they were a score, but this would still be a taxing musical effort. One would have to imagine the cumulative effect of four actual voices, possibly supported by a few instruments, as suggested by the cornet and *viola da braccio* played by two of the angels.

This idea of an actual or imagined, carefully calibrated collaboration is also implied in the structure of the music. It is what is commonly known as imitative: there is a certain repetition across the various parts.³⁹ This is clearest in bars 11 to 13 [Fig. 17.10]. At the end of bar 11 and for all of bar 12 the main voice or cantus and the supporting tenor have a rising cadence from E and G respectively. This movement is then echoed by the alto at the end of bar 12, rising now from F. It is not a straightforward repetition because it begins on a different note and has a different rhythm, but there is still an upward movement, a musical phrase like a question posed and then reprised.

At the same time there is also a falling cadence, an answer. The alto begins this on C at the beginning of bar 12, and it is then picked up by the cantus and tenor in bar 13, harmonically descending from A and C respectively. Thus the question and the answer are deftly interwoven, posed and responded to simultaneously. Meanwhile, across these two bars, the bass follows a different pattern, closer to a rhythmical inversion of the opening phrase. This serves as a vocal anchor for the conversation between the other three voices. In this passage, as across the whole piece, the musical harmony is generated by a tightly controlled dialogue between the four voices, by questions, answers and echoes thereof.

In Antwerp, in 1584, when the very concept of Christian art had been denied and with a besieging army outside the city walls, the possibility of dialogic voices working together to produce sacred harmony must have come with a powerful if wistful sense of promise. The music in the print attempts to voice an ideal of Christian peace, love and fraternity. It invites us, as potential performers, to come together and embody through our singing, or in our imagining of such singing, a musical and artistic fellowship in Christ.

39 http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ueaezproxy.uea.ac.uk:2048/subscriber/article/grove/music/29196?q=Verdonck&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit, last accessed 27 September 2016.

In actual performance Verdonck's motet comes with great verbal clarity. It is easy to hear that it reprises the two biblical passages that, together, make the Hail Mary. Only it is not the Hail Mary exactly. With ecumenical delicacy the conventional 'Maria' is not included in the opening phrase 'Ave gratia plena'. Instead the text is emphatically only the two constituent biblical passages, as evident from the repeat of the phrase 'amongst women' in two distinct cases, 'in mulieribus' and 'inter mulieres' [Figs. 17.10 & 17.11].

So, when the print invites its audience to sing or imagine its dialogic and echoing song, it also suggests that one should imitate the angels above, who in turn reprise two biblical voices. The first is that of the archangel Gabriel at the Annunciation, the second Mary's cousin Elizabeth at the Visitation. If we consent, and perform either physically or mentally, we become the third resounding echo of the original biblical utterance in a long chain of musical mimesis. That is to say: the viewers of this print are to perform Christian fellowship not just amongst themselves but across time, slotting into the grander narrative of salvation.

At the same time, by emphatically including the two biblical passages, the print becomes a pictorial oddity. The standard iconography for the angelic salutation is the Annunciation, and Elizabeth's exultation is strongly associated with imagery of the Visitation. This both De Vos and Sadeler knew well, as is evident from a print they made together in 1576 [Fig. 17.12]. There, in the margins, the Annunciation and the Visitation are depicted with their usual biblical passages. In turn, the position of these scenes has bearing on the print from 1584 where the two relevant episodes are playfully alluded to in the background, on either side of the throne. On the left there is a carpenter working in a courtyard, surely to be construed as Joseph. This, then, is the exterior space of the Annunciation. For, within Christian pictorial conventions, this is virtually always an interior scene, set in Mary's house. Meanwhile, on the right, there is a church interior, which may stand for the Temple, the internal space of the Visitation, usually set outside or on a threshold. But now the Temple stands empty, abandoned by its servants Zachariah and Elizabeth, who have rushed outside to greet their visiting relatives. These secondary spaces are thus playful inversions, fitting visual complements to the play between biblical utterances and echoing voices in the music.

In the existing literature on this print, such as it is, the elderly woman seated on the right is identified as St. Anne, Mary's mother and Christ's grandmother.⁴⁰ However, given that the song printed above reprises St. Elizabeth's voice, it

40 Vignau-Wilbert, "Bildmotteten und Motettenbilder" 54; and Schuckman, *Maarten de Vos* 154.



FIGURE 17.12 Jan Sadeler I after Marten de Vos, *Coronation of the Virgin* (1576). Copperplate engraving on paper; 25.2 × 18.4 cm. RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.

could equally be her. On the other hand, the elderly woman stares intently at Christ's shoulder and holds up his right arm by the elbow, perhaps in premonition of how these childish joints will be wrenched on the Cross for the love of mankind. That she is a prophetess is further suggested by the book on her lap showing a lightly edited passage from Isaiah:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, [the everlasting father,] the prince of peace.

ISAIAH 9:6

Perhaps she is the prophetess Anna who was there when Christ was presented in the Temple. That the passage from Isaiah is engraved upside down is a further complication; one must turn the print around to read it, another eliciting of audience involvement, now in the form of touch.

This all leads to the conclusion that the elderly woman should not be too firmly identified. She is four voices in one, St. Anne, St. Elizabeth, Anna the prophetess and Isaiah. Like the music above and the two scenes on the left and right she invites us to wonder, to imagine and to speculate. Perhaps she is everywoman, a model for the devout Christian soul in contemplation of all the hopes for peace and wise governance articulated in Isaiah's lyrical visions of the Messiah. At the same time, the prophecies of Isaiah form an important part of the Advent liturgy and, in the Low Countries, they were also closely linked with Joyous Entries, a type of ceremony associated with contractual and benevolent monarchical power.⁴¹ As such, this biblical passage conveys hope for political as well as religious peace, a hope which must have felt extremely timely in Antwerp in 1584, at least amongst those who disapproved of the Calvinist government.

That this is not a straightforward image of Christ's maternal lineage is further articulated in the inscription at the bottom of the throne: 'My mother and my brethren are those who hear the word of God, and do it' (*Luke 8:21*). Clearly, and in keeping with De Vos's Lutheran sympathies, and perhaps also with Sadeler's, one is not to pray to Mary or anyone else in the image, but rather to salute them as exemplary, and to become like them in obedience to the Word. Like Mary, in singing the motet we take the Word into ourselves and make it fruitful, productive of Christian harmony.

⁴¹ Arnade P., *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy, and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford: 1998) 53–87; on the intensified relevance of the Joyous Entry ritual in Antwerp in the sixteenth century, see Thøfner, *A Common Art* 81–167.

To visualise this point, De Vos has embedded the idea of pictorial practice as Christo- and Maria-mimesis at the heart of the image via the grapes, held by Mary and Christ together and then reprised as ornaments on top of small Doric columns on either side of the throne. The implication is that the pillars of God's throne are those who imitate Christ and Mary and, in the process, become part of the fellowship of Christ, fruiting branches of the true vine. Already here De Vos evoked the notion of the Christian Zeuxis that he would later rework in the St. Luke altarpiece of 1602.

Finally, it is striking that Sadeler the print-maker signed himself on the left, beneath the image of Joseph the worker and on Mary's proper right. De Vos's signature is on the other side, next to the seated elderly woman and beneath the empty Temple. On one level, this alludes to the bare and quiet churches found in Antwerp in 1584 and, by extension, to the threat to De Vos's and Verdonck's livelihoods that these constituted. At the same time, it also suggests that the painter, as designer of the image, is more akin to the prophetess or visionary, harbouring an imaginative sensitivity to Divine inspiration. Meanwhile, the engraver combines the work of Mary and Joseph, Christ's terrestrial parents, who brought him to life and together tended to his humanity. The composer's work is already located firmly above. He invites us to imagine how the angels sing. Together, each artist mediates or gives sensory form to the Divine but in his own way: in music, in imagery and in print.

Much more could be said about details like the clouds above, the angels' instruments, the contrast between the balustrade in the left middleground and the stairs on the right, the unusual half-blessing gesture of the Christ Child, the flowers below the throne and the richly textured fabric behind it, and its slight but unsettling asymmetry and peculiar perspective. Together with the points discussed above, these passages all add richness and texture to this unusually ambitious and complex print. On the whole, though, it is the inclusion of music that makes this an extraordinarily dynamic and multivalent image. Polyphonic song is simultaneously melody and a layering of harmonic texture. To this—and probably because of the particular religious and political situation in which they found themselves—De Vos and Sadeler responded with an equally layered and textured print, across which visual rhythms and resonances echo playfully yet also solemnly.

Conclusion: Magnificat

The *Ave gratia plena* print seems to have been a success, for, as already suggested, the following year the three collaborators repeated the experiment



FIGURE 17.13 *Jan Sadeler I after Marten de Vos and Cornelis Verdonck, Magnificat (1585). Copperplate engraving on paper, 21 × 29.2 cm. RIJSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM.*

[Fig. 17.13]. This time the image included a motet of the *Magnificat* for five voices, with the singing Virgin at the centre.⁴² Unusually, she has her mouth open. There seems to be no iconographic precedent for this; it is another example of innovative collaboration.⁴³ Meanwhile, the music is even more imitative because the two tenor parts are exactly the same; the second simply begins a bar later than the first.⁴⁴ It is a playful ‘follow-the-leader’. Here, however, the

42 Schuckman, *Maarten de Vos* 163.

43 In the middle ages singers were usually portrayed with closed mouths. See, for example, Oliver, “Sounds and Visions of Heaven” 237.

44 The *Magnificat* may be heard in performance at <http://www.hemony.nl/hemony/muziekfragmenten>, last accessed 27 September 2016, and a modern transcript of the music is at <http://www.cpd.org/wiki/images/e/ec/Verdonck-Magnificat.pdf>, last accessed 27 September 2016.

challenge to the audience is slightly different: one is to take into oneself and reprise the expectant Virgin's praise as she sings with the angels. It is an emphatic invitation to Maria-mimesis.

At the bottom of the music on the left an inscription states that the print was issued to celebrate Farnese's 'redemption' of the city of Antwerp in August 1585. It may even be that Verdonck's motet was performed during his Joyous Entry into Antwerp, a ceremony staged both to reiterate and subvert the customary link between such events and expectations of benevolent princely rule.⁴⁵ The motet would have been highly appropriate, for the Virgin Mary was the patron saint of the city of Antwerp. Complex polyphonic music was definitely performed during the Entry: Farnese heard a *Te Deum* in the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk. Verdonck may have been among the performers or otherwise involved; later in life, in 1599, he would supply a motet for another Joyous Entry.⁴⁶

As this suggests, in spite of some of their religious sympathies, the three collaborators must have seen the fall of Antwerp as a delivery from the enemies of sacred art. This is also implied in the print itself, where the patroness of Antwerp and the angels fill a mostly empty interior with song. Poignantly this evokes the moment when the vaults of the vast but empty Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk resounded with the *Te Deum* for Farnese. This point is reinforced by the empty niche on the right side, hinting at iconoclasm or at least the removal of a sculpture, and also by the blank doorway behind Mary. It frames her as if she were an image, evoking the pictorial riches expected to return to ecclesiastical spaces now that Antwerp had been redeemed. The smoke rising up from the two candles to merge with the clouds above may stand for incense, but it is also a metaphor for Mary's song of praise rising up to God. Again, with ecumenical tactfulness, the Deity is not shown, only symbolised. Despite Farnese's victory, Antwerp was still heterodox and would remain so for the next four years. In 1585 it was by no means obvious that the conflict was over.

Commissioned some fifteen years later, De Vos's St. Luke altarpiece still bears the scars of that moment of conflict [Fig. 17.2]. It reiterates the idea of embodied and productive collaboration, most obviously between the physical grinding of the paint and the more advanced painterly work of Christ and Maria-mimesis. But it also nods towards the work of the book printers, in the elaborate columniation of the book on the right, possibly a Polyglot Bible.

45 Thøfner, *A Common Art* 149–156.

46 Boghe Joannes, *Historica Narratio Profectionis et Inaugurationis Serenissimorum Belgii Principum Alberti et Isabellae* (Antwerp, Jan Moretus: 1602) 269–272.

Finally, and as appropriate to its intended audience, the painting evokes music. Like the Virgin of the *Magnificat*, the central angel above has its mouth open. It is singing. The invitation to sing with the angels—and thus to perform and in the process embody loving Christian harmony—is here embedded in an altarpiece which had to cater for Roman Catholic harpsichord makers as well as for ex-Protestant painters and printmakers.

In short, here the making of art is presented as a very particular kind of mimesis. Art is a responsive echo of celestial music, a Christian performance of brotherly harmony to soothe and unify hearts and minds bruised in wars of religion.

That said, it cannot be established with certainty whether De Vos's, Sadeler's and Verdonck's extraordinary collaborative prints were received in the spirit in which they were conceived. Yet somebody liked them for there are three extant early modern copies of the *Ave Gratia Plena* print and five of the *Magnificat*.⁴⁷ Intriguingly, the Amsterdam printer Claes Janszoon Visscher was amongst those who copied the *Magnificat* in the seventeenth century. Known for his business acumen, he must have thought that the print and its music would appeal within his Calvinist-dominated but fundamentally heterodox home city.⁴⁸ And, as already noted, Sadeler would reprise the idea of combining music with printed imagery in another six individual sheets. The last of these—designed in Munich by Pieter de Witte, with music by Orlandus Lassus—was in 1700 re-worked into a stained glass window for the Anglican chapel of Denton Hall in Yorkshire.⁴⁹ There clearly was a market for such prints, a market transcending confessional boundaries. De Vos's, Sadeler's and Verdonck's robust defence of sacred art and sacred music found resonances well beyond Antwerp.

47 Schuckman, *Maarten de Vos* 154 and 163.

48 http://www.oxfordartonline.com.ueaezproxy.uea.ac.uk:2048/subscriber/article/grove/art/To89859?q=Visscher&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit, last accessed 27 September 2016.

49 Brighton T., "Henry Gyles, Virtuoso and Glasspainter of York, 1645–1709", *York Historian* 4 (1984). See also the helpful article: Lane G. – Plumb G., "David Singing God's Praise: A Musical Window by Henry Gyles", *Vidimus* 41 (2010) at <http://vidimus.org/issues/issue-41/feature/>, last accessed 27 September 2016. My thanks to Dr Clare Haynes for drawing this window to my attention.

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Bernardo Accolti, Raphael, and the *Sistine Madonna*: The Poetics of Desire and Pictorial Generation

Jonathan Unglaub

One of the most compelling and pervasive manifestations of the notion *Ut pictura amor* in the Renaissance is how the legacy of Petrarch's lyric conventions has shaped not only amorous poetry, but the painting of a beloved, generally female, subject, who is both vividly portrayed and abstracted as an archetype. A repertory of tropes, a template of ideal beauty, whose concrete figurability, whose possession, remained impossible, pervaded sixteenth-century writers from Pietro Bembo to Agnolo Firenzuola. The corresponding painting of female beauty, imbued with these features of imaginative presence but literal absence, became, in addition to its ostensible purpose of portrayal, a lodestone of subjective desire. As such the poet or painter, and their ultimate surrogates, the reader and spectator, mark 'the emergence of the affective beholder', as Elizabeth Cropper has termed in her fundamental studies on the reciprocal painted and poetic concepts of female beauty.¹ Although there are some pre-conceived parameters, beauty becomes a function of subjective desire, and, as such, the act of painting brokers an amorous discourse akin to the poetic evocation of an absent, remote, or otherwise elusive beloved. This reorientation of pictorial beauty from an absolute classical ideal to the lyrical expectations, and the perpetually deferred but thereby kindled desire of the engaged beholder for the represented subject, designates painting as an art of love.

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- 1 For the general themes in this paragraph, see the series of landmark studies by Elizabeth Cropper: Cropper E., "The Place of Beauty in the High Renaissance and its Displacement in the History of Art", in Vos A. (ed.), *Place and Displacement in the Renaissance* (Binghamton, NY: 1995) 159–205; idem, "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style", *Art Bulletin* 58 (1976) 374–394; and idem, "The Beauty of Woman: Problems in the Rhetoric of Renaissance Portraiture", in Ferguson M.W. – Quilligan M. – Vickers N.J. (eds.), *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago – London: 1982) 175–190.

My aim here is to consider a largely overlooked figure in this tradition, Bernardo Accolti (1458–1535), whose poetry offers an outrageous permutation of the Petrarchan legacy, almost to the point of parody. Not only his poetry, but his sensational persona, was the literal embodiment of amorous desire. Furthermore, works of art frequently provide the pretext and stimulus for his lyrical inventions. As I will argue in the conclusion, the conceptual framing, rather than description, of supreme sacred beauty in one of Accolti's most renowned poems finds intriguing analogues in Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*. Well known to Raphael, Accolti's name is not so familiar today—but we have all seen his unforgettable face, enshrined no less in the pictorial *summa* of Renaissance literary culture.

Upon entering the Stanza della Segnatura, one passes beneath a prominent full-length, standing figure in the foreground of the *Parnassus* fresco [Fig. 18.1]. Dressed partially in contemporary attire, bearing a highly idiosyncratic beaked nose that his bowed profile accentuates, this poet conspicuously raises his finger as if to silence the assembly of history's greatest bards. He gazes at the seated, bearded companion, who urgently gestures out of the fresco, toward the enthroned portrait of Julius II on the opposite wall. The *Parnassus* terminates in a contemporary corner, with the bearded pointer Antonio Tebaldeo, while Jacopo Sannazaro meets the viewer's gaze above. Between them looms Bernardo Accolti, known at 'Unico Aretino', so called for his unrivaled capacity to improvise verse. My earlier discovery of a sixteenth-century portrait of the same individual in a New York private collection confirms this identification [Fig. 18.2]. Indeed an overlooked inscription, likely eighteenth century, on the reverse of the panel reads 'Portrait of Bernardo Accolti by Andreo del Sarto'. I find the attribution tenable, as I argued extensively in an earlier article.² Vasari's inclusion of Accolti among the crowd of luminaries attending the 1515 Triumphant Entry of Leo X into Florence, signaled out for his 'nasone aquilano' in his description of the fresco in the *Ragionamenti*, provides independent verification of the poet's appearance [Fig. 18.3].³ I have recently come across an eighteenth-century engraving in an *Uomini illustri Toscani* volume that situates this rediscovered portrait, or a copy, in the Aretine collection of Count Angelo

2 On the foregoing, see Unglaub J., "Bernardo Accolti, Raphael's *Parnassus* and a New Portrait by Andrea del Sarto," *Burlington Magazine* 149 (2007) 14–22.

3 Vasari G., *Ragionamenti sopra le invenzioni da lui dipinte in Firenze nel Palazzo di Loro Altezze Serenissime*, ed. C.L. Ragghianti (Milan: 1949) 158: 'sopra fra tutti e due quel che ha quella zazzera, raso la barba, con quel nasone aquilino, è Bernardo Accolti aretino.' For the mural, see Muccini U. – Cecchi A., *Le stanze del principe nel Palazzo Vecchio* (Florence: 1991) 114–115.



FIGURE 18.1 *Raphael, Parnassus (1511–1512). Fresco, 670 cm at base. Vatican City, Palazzo Apostolico, Stanza della Segnatura. Detail of right foreground with Bernardo Accolti standing in the center.*

PHOTO CREDIT: SCALA / ART RESOURCE, NY.



FIGURE 18.2 *Attributed to Andrea del Sarto, Portrait of Bernardo Accolti (ca. 1515–1530). Oil on wood, 47.5 by 30.7 cm.*
NEW YORK, PRIVATE COLLECTION.



FIGURE 18.3

Giorgio Vasari, Triumphal Entry of Leo X into Florence (ca. 1555). Fresco. Florence, Palazzo Vecchio, Sala di Leone x. Detail of left edge, middle (Accolti second head from right at top).

PHOTO CREDIT: SCALA / ART RESOURCE, NY.

Bacci [Fig. 18.4].⁴ For Raphael's contemporaries, Unico Accolti's presence on the Vatican *Parnassus* was simply self-evident given his distinct countenance and enormous celebrity, both as unique as his name.

Bernardo Accolti hailed from a distinguished Arezzo family. He was born in 1458, the year his father, the historian Benedetto Accolti the elder, became chancellor of the Florentine Republic. Bernardo grew up in Laurentian Florence, an ambience that nurtured poetic genius, though his devotion to the Medici and funding of Piero's botched coup d'état of 1497 forced him into exile. In one sonnet, Accolti denounces Florence, who 'full of anger and disdain, have made me third, to your Dante, and your Petrarch, of whom, like me, you are unworthy'.⁵

4 Allegrini G., *Serie di ritratti d'uomini illustri toscani, con gli elogi istorici dei medesimi*, 4 vols. (Florence, Giuseppe Allegrini: 1766) I unpaginated, no. xxx. Inscription on the engraving signed Francesco Allegrini reads: 'Preso da un antico Quadretto del Museo dell'Ill.mo Sig.re Cav.re Angiolo Bacci Patrizio Aretino'.

5 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Rossiano 680 (x 60): f.89r: 'Che questo exilio pien d'invidia e sdegno / Terzo mi fa al Gran Petrarca, e Dante / De quali come di me non eri degno'. On Benedetto, see Black R., *Benedetto Accolti and the Florentine Renaissance* (Cambridge: 1985). For basic references on Bernardo, see L. Mantovani, entry in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 82 vols. (Rome: 1960) I 103–104. The most extensive biographical accounts of Accolti are Guarnera E., *Bernardo Accolti: Saggio biografico-critico* (Palermo: 1901); Gavagni F., *L'Unico Aretino (Bernardo Accolti) e la Corte dei Duchi d'Urbino (Arezzo: 1906)*; and Gnoli D., "Il gran lume aretin, l'Unico Accolti", in *La Roma di Leone X* (Milan: 1938) 266–299.



FIGURE 18.4 *Francesco Allegrini, Portrait of Bernardo Accolti, engraving after a painting in the collection of Cav. Angelo Bacci, in Serie di ritratti d'uomini illustri toscani, con gli elogi storici dei medesimi, vol. 1 (Florence, Giuseppe Allegrini: 1766), plate no. xxx. Ital 2710.7.*

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By this date, Accolti had produced his *Virginia* (1493), one of the earliest vernacular comedies. The *Virginia* was published in Accolti's frequently reprinted *Opera* of 1515 with a handful of sonnets, epigrams, and odes.⁶ Quite contrary to its frontispiece of a pensive poet crowned by fame [Fig. 18.5], Accolti's renown relied not on meditation and composition in the studiolo, but audacity and performance at Court. His restless genius carried him to courts throughout the peninsula, where his spontaneous rhapsodies made for singular entertainment, hence the sobriquet 'Unico'. Accolti specialized in the recitation of improvised vernacular love poetry, accompanied by the lute or bowed *lyra da braccio*, where extravagant conceits expressed the inflammation of the enamored poet, the cruel indifference of the beloved, and the unceasing torments that resulted. Success depended on the union of musical rhythm and the quick wit of improvisation, rather than reverence to Petrarchan form, evoked to be perverted.⁷ His outrageous performances mesmerized his audiences, especially fanatic court ladies, who threw themselves at their serenader. Indeed, Accolti's groupies included no less than Lucrezia Borgia, Isabella d'Este, and especially Elisabetta Gonzaga, the Duchess of Urbino.⁸ One enduring mark of Accolti's celebrity is the conclusion of the *Orlando furioso*, where Ariosto extols an assembly of poets and humanists, but none more so than: 'the shining light of Arezzo, Unico Accolti', who outshines even the cumulative radiance of the

6 Composed for the wedding festivities of Antonio Spannocchi in Siena, the *Virginia* was first published in 1512, reprinted in 1514, and included in the following year in *Opera nova del preclarissimo Messer Bernardo Accolti Aretino Scriptore Apostolico, & Abreviatore Zoe soneti capitoli Strammoti & una comedia Recitata nelle solenne Noze del Magnifico Antonio Spannocchi nella inclyta Cipta di Siena* (Venice, Nicolò Zopino e Vincenzo Compagno: 1515). There are numerous sixteenth-century editions between 1519–1565. In the remainder of the essay, I cite from the following paginated edition: Accolti B., *Comedia di M. Bernardo Accolti Aretino intitolata la Verginia, con un Capitolo della Madonna* (Venice, Nicolò Zopino: 1535). On the *Virginia*, which may have been a source for Shakespeare's *All's Well that Ends Well*, see Cole H., "Bernardo Accolti's *Virginia*: The Uniqueness of Unico Aretino", *Renaissance Drama* 10 (1979) 3–32; and Calise A.G., "La Virginia' di Bernardo Accolti: una commedia inedita del XV secolo: edizione critica", Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1984.

7 On Accolti's performances from a musical standpoint, see Cummings A., *The Lion's Ear: Pope Leo X, the Renaissance Papacy, and Music* (Ann Arbor: 2012) 132–139; and idem, *The Maecenas and the Madrigalist: Patrons, Patronage, and the Origins of the Italian Madrigal* (Philadelphia: 2004) 82–94. In addition to mentioning Vasari's portrayal of Unico in the Palazzo Vecchio fresco, Cummings reproduces another contemporary portrait of Accolti in the woodcut illustration to Sigismondo Fanti, *Triumpho di fortuna* (Venice, Giunta: 1527) xxvi.

8 Gavagni, *L'Unico Aretino* 22–30; Gnoli, "il gran lume" 277–283; and Luzio A. – Renier R., *Mantova e Urbino: Isabella d'Este ed Elisabetta Gonzaga nelle relazioni familiari e nelle vicende politiche* (Turin: 1893) 258–270.



FIGURE 18.5 Bernardo Accolti in his Studiolo, woodcut frontispiece to *Opera noua del preclarissimo Messer Bernardo Accolti Aretino Scriptore Apostolico, & Abbreviatore Zoe soneti capitoli Strammoti & una comedia con dui capitoli uno in laude dela Madonna Laltro de la Fede* (Venice, Nicolò Zopino e Vincenzo Compagno: 1519). IC5 Ac276 515ob.

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gentildonne of Mantua, Ferrara, and Urbino who had gathered to greet him.⁹ Similarly, upon entering Raphael's Stanza, contemporaries surveying the luminaries on Mount Parnassus could not have helped but exclaim: 'Ecco l'Unico'!

Accolti's standard fare included the eight-line *strambotto* and Petrarchan love sonnets. Many of the latter were directed toward 'Julia', the unrequited object of Accolti's all-consuming passions. A selection appears in the 1515 *Opera*, while many more are only known through manuscript collections, presumably transcribed from his 'extemporized' oral repertory.¹⁰ While Accolti's verse channels the Petrarchan longing for an unattainable beauty, he tips the descriptive balance from emblazoning the beloved to itemizing the sufferings of the frustrated lover, so that the subjectivity of desire becomes entirely solipsistic. Female beauty in Petrarchan lyric is an artificial construct of scattered perfections, a fetishized, disembodied beauty that is more a reflection of the speaker's desire, and the inadequacy of the medium to achieve a veritable portrayal, to 'incarnate her lovely face'.¹¹ Accolti satirizes the limits of the

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- 9 Ariosto, L., *Orlando furioso* (Ferrara, Rosso: 1532) XLVI.10: 'Le Ferrarese mie qui sono, e quelle / De la corte d'Urbino: e riconosco / Quelle di Mantua, e quante donne belle / Ha Lombardia, quante il paese Tosco: / Il cavalier che tra loro viene, e ch'ella / Honoran si, s'io non ho l'occhio losco / Da la luce offuscato de' bei volti, / È'l gran lume aretin l'Unico Accolti'.
- 10 The most extensive of these are Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Rossiana 680 (x 60): "Rime Di Messer Bernardo Accolti d'Arezzo Cognominto L'Unico Aretino Duca di Nepi" and Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Codice CXXXV (5437): "Rime di Bernardo Accolti Aretino". For an overview and index of the former, see Ianuale R., "Prima ricognizione del manoscritto Rossiano 680 della biblioteca apostolica vaticana", *Filologia e critica* 19 (1994) 276–96; also idem, "Per l'edizione delle "Rime" di Bernardo Accolti detto L'Unico Aretino", *Filologia e critica* 18 (1993) 153–74. A modern critical edition of just the thematic octaves in Rossiana 680 is Sacchi M.P.M., "Le ottave epigrammatiche di Bernardo Accolti nel ms. Rossiano 680: Per la storia dell'epigramma in volgare tra quattro e cinquecento", *Interpres* 15 (1995–1996) 219–301.
- 11 The classic account of the itemization of the beauteous features of the unattained beloved in Petrarch is Vickers N.J., "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme", *Critical Inquiry* 8 (1981) 265–279. As Vickers notes, Petrarch himself famously recognizes the fallibility of his medium in Rime 308, see Durling R.M. (ed. – trans.), *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The Rime sparse and other lyrics* (Cambridge, MA: 1976) 486–487: 'Quella per cui con Sorga ò cangiato Arno, / con franca povertà serve ricchezze, / volse in amaro sue sante dolcezze / ond'io già vissi, or me ne struggo et scarno. / Da poi più volte ò riprovato indarno / al secol che verrà l'alte bellezze / pinger cantando, a ciò che l'alme et prezze, / né col mio stile il suo bel viso incarno. / Le lode, mai non d'altra, et proprie sue, / che 'n lei fur come stelle in cielo sparte, / pur ardisco ombreggiare, or una or due; / ma poi ch'i' giungo a la divina parte, / ch'un chiaro et breve sole al mondo fue. / ivi manca l'ardir, l'ingegno et l'arte'. ('She for whom I exchanged Arno for Sorgue and slavish riches / for free poverty, turned her holy sweetness, on which I once lived, into bitterness, / by which I now am

convention by not divulging a single clue of Julia's appearance: her comeliness is presumed only as a factor of its affective impact, the torments caused by a haughty and indifferent paramour that Accolti excessively catalogues. He constructs the cruel Julia as the antipode to Petrarch's beatific Laura.

A number of Accolti's poems to Julia are couched in terms of painted or sculpted portraits of the beloved, following the example of Petrarch's sonnet extolling the heavenly beauty of Laura, and lamenting the possessive inadequacy of Simone Martini's portrait of her, despite its exquisite form. It is worth recalling Petrarch's imagery as the lyric paragon that Accolti uniquely upends.

Quando giunse a Simon l'alto concetto ch' a mio nome gli pose in man lo stile,	When Simon received the high idea which, for my sake, put his hand to his stylus,
s'avesse dato a l'opera gentile colla figura voce ed intelletto,	if he had given to his noble work voice and intellect along with form
di sospir molti mi sgombrava il petto che ciò ch' altri a più caro a me fan vile.	he would have lightened my breast of many sighs that make what others prize most vile to me.
Però che 'n vista ella si monstra umile, promettendomi pace ne l'aspetto,	For in appearance she seems humble, and her expression promises peace;
ma poi ch' i' vengo a ragionar con lei, benignamente assai par che m'ascolte: se risponder sapesse a' detti miei!	then, when I come to speak to her, she seems to listen most kindly: if she could only reply to my words!
Pigmaliòn, quanto lodar ti dei de l'immagine tua, se mille volte n'avesti quel ch' i' sol una vorrei!	Pygmalion, how glad you should be of your statue, since you received a thousand times what I yearn to have just once! ¹²

destroyed and disfigured. / Since then I have often tried in vain to depict in song for the age / to come her high beauties, that it may love and prize them, / nor with my style can I incarnate her lovely face. / Still now and again I dare to adumbrate one or two of the praises / that were always hers, never any other's, that were as many as / the stars spread across the sky; / but when I come to her divine part, / which was a bright, brief sun to the world, / there fails my daring, my wit, and my art').

12 Petrarch, *Rime sparse* no. 78, in Durling, *Petrarch's Lyric Poems* 178–179. On the relationship between Petrarch's vernacular literary enterprise and the refined style of Simone's art, see Campbell C.J., "Simone Martini, Petrarch, and the Vernacular Poetics of Early

Petrarch, though admiring of Simone's 'alto concetto' of Laura, envies Pygmalion's beloved effigy, and the reciprocal desire it offers.

Accolti's sonnet, instead of praising the peaceful humbleness of a simulated celestial countenance, lacking but voice and spirit, addresses his painter:

Tu che ritrai quella fronte superba Ch'oggi d'ogni bellezza el titol porta	You who portray that prideful forehead That today carries the palm of every beauty,
Ritrai prima una vite che sopporta,	Portray first a vine that generates grapes,
Uva a gli occhi matura, al gusto acerba;	Which look ripe to the eyes, but bitter to the taste;
Ritrai un fonte che lacrime serba, Ritrai lungha speranza e pace corta,	Portray a fountain that stores tears, Portray long hopes and short peace of mind,
Ritrai fede e pietade insieme morta, Ritrai, serpe nascoso in fiori, e herba.	Portray faith and piety together dead, Portray, a serpent concealed in the flowers and field.
Ma'n ritrar lei fuggi el troppo iuditio, Di voler tanto emular la Natura. Che resti vinto dal proprio artificio.	But in portraying her, resist too much discernment, too much desiring to emulate Nature, Let her remain conquered by your own artifice.
Che s'alla viva la Pitta figura Fai simil punto, con nuovo supplitio S'accenderà 'l Pittor, di sua Pittura.	Since if you make the painted figure similar to life, the Painter, stung with new torment Will be inflamed by his own painting. ¹³

Renaissance Art", Symposium Papers LI: Dialogues in Art History from Mesopotamian to Modern—Readings for a New Century, *Studies in the History of Art* 74 (2009) 206–221.

- 13 Copies of this poem are in Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Codice CXXXV (5437): "Rime di Bernardo Accolti Aretino", fols. 56r-v.; Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Cl.vii, num. 371: "Sonetti, Canzoni et Madrigali di varii auctori in lingua tosa segnati de nomi loro", fol. 38v–39r.

Contrary to Petrarch's envy of Pygmalion's statue and praise of Simone's portrayal as the best surrogate possible, however imperfect, Accolti astoundingly admonishes the painter to avoid capturing a true likeness. Accolti intimates that only the painter's artifice can conquer the beloved's allure, as though the imposition of his genius, his *concetto*, would serve to blunt the seductive power of the original. If the painter aspires to portray a living simulacrum—precisely that for which Petrarch yearns—he will suffer Accolti's own miserable fate. Inflamed by love for his creation, but without Pygmalion's fulfillment, the painter would be destined to endure the same litany of torments—tears, false hope, agitated mind, lost piety, and faith—whose figures most accurately capture the essence of Julia.

In another poem, Accolti similarly claims that the pathetic, even suicidal, victim of thwarted desire provides the model for the true portrait of the beloved, this time sculpted:

Julia vedendosi in marmo scolpita, Disse, o, Scultor, dove m'hai vista ignuda?	Julia, seeing herself sculpted in marble Said: O sculptor, where have you seen me exposed?
Rispose lui nella fronte smarrita	He replied: in the stunned countenance
D'un che t'ama, & vuoi morte in terra el chiuda	Of one who loves you, and you wish death to seal him in the Earth
Onde lei se a cui m'ama tolgo vita	Wherefore she [says] if I take the life of he who loves me
Perchè m'hai facta pia eßendo cruda?	Why [she asks] being cruel, have you made me pious?
Perchè esprimer solo puo lo scultore Che mostra el volto, & non che pensa el core.	Because the sculptor can only express What the face shows: and not what the heart thinks. ¹⁴

In the portrait, Julia sees her true nature exposed, which the sculptor had discerned in the poet/lover's desperation, even though the work outwardly seems to convey her virtue. In this case the sculptor remains bound to appearances, with only the amorous subject herself able to perceive therein what the poet's face expresses all too well. Accolti further develops this dialectic between deceptive outer appearance and the elusive potential for ultimate possession and

14 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Rossiano 680 (x 60), fol. 72v. Printed in Accolti, *Comedia* 50v.

satisfaction in one of his most outrageous conceits, comparing Julia to an artichoke, in “D’un Carciophono”:

<p>Tu tien’ fra mille inganni el ver celato, Et quel fra mille frondi asconde el frutto. Tu dai fra tanti stratii un favor raro, Et quel fra tante in qualche foglia al, fine Ha sapor breve, el resto è tutto amaro [...].’</p>	<p>You with a thousand deceits, conceal the truth and it among a thousand leaves hides the fruit. Within so may teasing layers, you rarely grant favor and it within so many bracts, the few at the center among such bitterness, has a fleeting flavor [...].¹⁵</p>
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Perhaps Accolti is best known as a mainstay among the gathering of luminaries at the Court of Urbino, immortalized in Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier*. At the slightest provocation, Signor Unico would avow his all-consuming passion for Duchess Elisabetta Gonzaga, who supplanted Julia as his muse and tormenter. As Emilia Pia solicits the evening’s topic from the assembled gentlemen, Accolti insists that they interrogate the Duchess, to extract confessions of deceit from this ingrate, a siren with angel eyes and a serpent’s heart lurking behind her enchanting beauty and honeyed speech. Unable to employ implements of torture, ropes and chains, he suggests that everyone speculate what the ‘S’ upon the Duchess’s forehead, presumably a piece of jewelry like that seen in Raphael’s portrait, reveals about her character [Fig. 18.6]. When Emilia retorts that only the besotted Unico is privy to such knowledge, he takes up his only weapons, his wit and his lute, and improvises a sonnet on the ‘S’.¹⁶ It reveals to all how her ‘superbia’ and ‘sdegno’ renders Accolti ‘sconsolato’, ‘stento’, ‘sconforto’, ‘supplitio’, ‘sospetto’, and ‘sciolto in servitudine’.¹⁷ Throughout

15 Accolti, *Comedia* 47r.

16 Accolti appears in Castiglione B., *Il libro del Cortegiano*, ed. V. Cian (Florence: 1910) I.ix, II.v–vi, III.vii, lx–lxiii (29–32, 145–147, 305–306, 388–391). On the ‘S’ episode, I.ix, 29–32. On the ‘S’ sonnet and the scorpion device in Elisabetta Gonzaga’s portrait, see Luzio – Renier, *Mantova e Urbino* 260; and Shearman J., “Raphael at the Court of Urbino”, *Burlington Magazine* 112 (1970) 76, n. 13.

17 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Rossiano 680 (x 60), fol. 109r: ‘Per segno del mio amor nel fronte porto / Un S; qual dinota ogni mio stato, / E cosi varia il suo significato / Come vario il martir, come il conforto / Quando avvien, ch’io riceva inganno, ò torto / Significa questo S sconsolato / Sangue, stratio, sudor, suplitio, e strato / Spiacer, stento, sospir, sdegno, e e sconforto. / Ma di poi mostra di soccorso segno, / S’avvien, che’in quale le parte il martir mute, / Soave servitù, speme, e sostegno. / Quando son poi fra ’l danno, e la



FIGURE 18.6 *Raphael, Portrait of Elisabetta Gonzaga, Duchess of Urbino (ca. 1505). Oil on panel, 52.9 × 37.4 cm. Florence, Galleria degl'Uffizi.*

PHOTO CREDIT: SCALA / ART RESOURCE, NY.

the *Courtier*, Signor Unico continuously interjects and cuts off other speakers, only to spew his self-serving improvisations on his own torments that contribute nothing to the understanding of the perfect courtier or ideal love. Indeed, such forced imagery is the antithesis of the supreme 'S' in Castiglione's project: *sprezzatura*.

Unico's courtship of the Duchess was an elaborate farce, a play of gallantry, but one that was enacted continuously over the years, adding luster to Accolti's fame. Elisabetta Gonzaga generated nearly as much literary production as the fictive Julia, whom she supplants as Accolti's sadistic paramour, and the poet likewise frames her amorous powers in terms of works of art. In one sonnet, Accolti describes the 'nuovo concepto' of Helen's pulchritude that Zeuxis had forged from the scattered beauties of the maidens of Croton, but would cherish instead the singular, stupendous, and chaste beauty of the Duchess of Urbino:

Quando d'Helena Argiva efinger volse	When the ancient Zeuxis wished to depict
L'antiquo Zeusi el simulachro electo	The elect simulacrum of the Argive Helen
Di tucta Gretia con nuovo concepto	With a novel concept, he gathered together
Le più formose donne insieme acolse.	The most beautiful women of all Greece.
E d'una gli aurei crini ch'al vento sciolse	And from one, the golden tresses unbound in the breeze
D'altra la bocha, d'altra el dolce aspecto	From the other the mouth, from another the sweet aspect
D'altra la man, d'altra el piè, d'altra el pecto	From another the hand, the foot, from the other the chest
D'altra la gola per exemplo tolse.	From yet another the throat, for example, he took.
Ma s'alhor con laudata experientia	But with praiseworthy experiment
Poneva el Cel che van disegni guasta	The Heavens put forth the Duchess of Urbino
La Duchessa d'Urbino in sua presentia.	Whose presence shatters the vain designs.

salute. / Sospetto mostra al mio viver indegno, / Soluti, e stretto, e sciolto in servitute'. The famous 'S' sonnet was interpolated in many early editions of the *Courtier*, see Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano* 31–32, n. 39.

Vinto da sua Belta stupenda, e casta	Vanquished by her chaste and stupendous beauty,
A tucte l'altre donando licentia	giving leave to all of the others,
Dicto haveria questa sola mi basta.	I would have said that this one alone, would satisfy me. ¹⁸

The individual models exhibit canonical Petrarchan features—such as the windswept blonde locks, but here the actual beloved transcends the dismembered beauties that necessarily belie concrete fulfillment. In “Rime 130”, Petrarch attributes his mental image of Laura to a divine craftsman, which surpasses that which Zeuxis, Phidias, or Praxiteles could have made, but Accolti contrasts the verifiable beauty of the Heaven-sent Duchess, to the scattered perfections that Zeuxis vainly consolidates.¹⁹ As Cropper notes, Zeuxis’s synthesizing ideal beauty from diverse empirically observed specimens is inherently artificial. While such an approach seemingly counters the Petrarchan inventorying of scattered beautiful features in forging a perfected body, the resulting creation is equally elusive in terms of possessing a specific beloved.²⁰ While Accolti claims that the Duchess’s veritable person surpasses such contrived ideals, her chastity eclipsing the licentious beauty of Zeuxis’s Helen still thwarts and scorns his insatiable desire.

Accolti accorded the second place in his frustrated heart to Isabella d’Este, the Marchioness of Mantua, whose chaste beauty he lauds as impervious to Jupiter’s thunderbolts. Isabella is a new miracle of womanhood creating in Mantua a ‘*novo Parnaso*’ where poets vie with lutes and violas to sing her virtues; but he elsewhere denounces her as a ‘*ficatella*’, for conspiring with her sister in law to thwart his amorous desires.²¹ Indeed, the dispatches to the Marchioness

18 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Rossiano 680 (x 60), fol. 93 verso: “Elisabet Ducisse Urbini”. On Accolti’s poems dedicated to Duchess Elisabetta Gonzaga, including a transcription and brief analysis of this one, see Sigorini S., *Poesia a corte: le rime per Elisabetta Gonzaga* (Urbino 1488–1526) (Pisa, 2008) 120–143, 266–268.

19 Petrarch, *Rime sparse*, no. 130, in Durling, *Petrarch’s Lyric Poems* 268–269: ‘Et sol ad una imagine m’attengo / che fe’ non Zeusi, o Prasitele, o Fidia, / ma miglior mastro, et di più alto ingegno’ (‘And I keep myself to one image, / which was not made by Zeuxis or Praxiteles, or Phidias, / but by a better craftsman and a higher mind’).

20 Cropper, “The Beauty of Woman” 183: ‘In the Petrarchan tradition, the object of desire is necessarily dismembered and physically absent; figurative and coloristic metaphor consciously deny specific mimetic reference. The goal of the painter who, like Zeuxis gathering together the beauties of the virgins of Croton, reunites scattered beauty, is the direct antithesis of the poet’s fragmentation of presence in the *Rime sparse*’.

21 Guarnera, *Bernardo Accolti* 146–149 (letter from Accolti to Isabella, dated 15 March 1502, in the Archivio Gonzaga, Categgio Romano, Archivio di Stato, Mantua). For further on this

in Mantua from her Roman ambassador Stazio Gadio, when her ten-year old son Federico Gonzaga was a political hostage at the Papal Court, record some of the most memorable circumstances for Accolti's rhapsodies. Immortalized by Raphael as a Euclidian pupil in the *School of Athens*, Federico had 'Sr. Unico' as one of his actual tutors, who guided the youth around the antiquities of Rome. The child would importune Accolti to improvise verses, when not otherwise bemoaning the cruelty of his mother and aunt.²² One wonders if these did not include the poems on the recently unearthed *Laocoön*, contained in a Vatican manuscript. The renowned Hellenistic group had been discovered in 1506, excavated from a subterranean chamber of the Baths of Titus on the Esquiline hill, in the presence of Giuliano da Sangallo and Michelangelo, who identified the work as the one extolled in Pliny. Soon thereafter, Jacopo Sadoletto penned a vivid ekphrasis on the group, rivaling Vergil's *Aeneid* in horrifically describing the Trojan priest's gruesome demise.²³ At what must have been the same moment of fascination with the spectacular find, Accolti instead gives the statue itself voice:

Lacoontis Statua

Morto a Troya, e rinato a Roma in
Sasso
Per occultar le mie pene meschine
Son stato ascoso in loco humido, e
basso

I died at Troy, and I am reborn at
Rome in stone
To shroud my wicked punishments
I was hidden in a place, damp and lowly

letter, in which Accolti praises Isabella's capacity as both patron and performer, in the context of her significant musical acumen, see Prizer W.F., "Una 'Virtù Molto Conveniente a Madonne': Isabella d'Este as a Musician", *The Journal of Musicology* 17 (1999) 32–33.

- 22 Luzio A., "Federico Gonzaga ostaggio alla Corte di Giulio II", *Archivio Romano di storia patria* 9 (1887) 510–516: 'Hoggi è montato et ha cavalcato al Capitolio, al Coliseo, et ad veder molte altre antichità con bella compagnia, sempre fra' quali era il Sr. Unico. Ritornato la sera a casa il Sr. mio retenne seco a cena, accarezzando et honorandolo assai, il Sr. Unico, qual non si posseva satiar di laudare la bellezza del Sr. mio, e spesso diceva: tu assimili ben a quella traditrice di tua madre, tu sei ben così bello, come è tua madre, ingannatrice e maga. O povera Aretino, questa casa di Gonzaga ha tuolto ad disfarti e cruciarti, e le fichatella di la Marchesana et la giotoncella de la Duchessa di Urbino' (515; Letter of 6 September 1510 from Stazio Gadio to Isabella d'Este). On the portrait in *School of Athens*, see Vasari G., *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, ed. G. Milanesi, 9 vols. (Florence: 1878–1885) IV 331.
- 23 Pliny, *Natural History*, xxxvi, 37. Accolti's verses were probably composed around the same time as Jacopo Sadoletto's renowned "De Laocoontis statua" of 1506; see, with further references, Baxandall M., "Jacopo Sadoletto's Laocoön", in *Words for Pictures: Seven Papers on Renaissance Art and Criticism* (New Haven: 2003) 98–116.

Seculi aßai tra l'antique ruine,	for so many centuries among the ancient ruins,
Et hor riducto al sol dimostro hay lasso	And now brought back to the sun, wretched—you show me
Che'l cel non vuole che'l mio duolo habbia fine.	that heaven desires no end to my torments.
Sol m'ha negato lo sculptor acorto	The shrewd sculptor has only denied me voice,
Voce, perch'io non gridi, Io moro, a torto.	So that I do not scream out, 'I die', unjustly. ²⁴

Opting for incisive brevity over Sadoletto's extensive description, Accolti here epitomizes the paradoxes of literal silence and implied expression, dead substance and living representation. The prevailing irony is that rebirth as art only prolongs, indeed immortalizes suffering, and silences just outrage. Here Accolti transfers the literal torment, typically endured figuratively by the scorned lover, to the aesthetic object of the poem itself, assuming the author's voice, which paradoxically he lacks as mute stone.

Events would soon shift Accolti's attention from minding the Gonzaga scion to curial politics. In 1510, Pope Julius II elevated Accolti's brother Pietro, bishop of Ancona, to the Cardinalate. Accolti enlisted Isabella D'Este in his ambitious plot to see his brother crowned the next Pope, since such elevation would render him a worthy spouse for the widowed Duchess Elisabetta. Truth be told, with his 'unico fratello' as *conclavista*, Cardinal Pietro performed respectably in the first round of voting in the conclave following Julius's death in 1513.²⁵ In the end, Cardinal Giovanni de'Medici was crowned Leo X, yet this outcome can hardly be counted as a setback, since Accolti now reaped Medici largesse. As we have seen, Accolti accompanied the Pope on his triumphal return to Florence in 1515. There he published the *Descriptione d'una Caccia di più nobilissime donne fiorentine*, an epyllion on a fictive hunt enlisting the finest Florentine noblewomen, under the auspices of the Pope's niece, Clarice

24 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Rossiano 680 70 verso. This poem has been printed in Sacchi, "Le ottave epigrammatiche" 294, no. 60. An unpublished sonnet on the *Laocoön* is in Rossiano 680, fol. 73r.

25 Luzio – Renier, *Mantova e Urbino* 267–270; and Gnoli, "Il gran lume" 284–289. A letter of 25 March 1513 from Mario Equicola to Isabella d'Este recounts Unico's participation in the conclave, see Luzio A., "Isabella d'Este ne'primordi del papato di Leone X e il suo viaggio a Roma nel 1514–15," *Archivio storico Lombardo* 33 (1906) 457–458. On Cardinal Pietro Accolti, most famous for his contribution to the 1520 bull condemning Luther ("Exsurge Domine"), see Ulianich B., in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 82 vols. (Rome: 1960) 1 106–110.



FIGURE 18.7 Venus, Diana, and Eros, woodcut illustration to *Descriptione d'una Caccia di più nobilissime Donne fiorentine & innamoramento di Venere Allo Illustriss. S. Lorenzo de Medici, dove si contiene lor meritissime laude* (Florence: ca. 1515), unpaginated, with detail of Eros (*Unico Accolti?*). Typ 525.15.321.

HOUGHTON LIBRARY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

Strozzi, who rivals Diana and Venus in her skill and beauty. Though published anonymously with a dedication to Lorenzo de Medici, Duke of Urbino, the bizarre features of an Eros in the woodcut illustration leave little doubt of the author—the self styled paragon of love [Fig. 18.7].²⁶ Accolti also organized

26 *Descriptione d'una Caccia di più nobilissime Donne fiorentine & innamoramento di Venere Allo Illustriss. S. Lorenzo de Medici, dove si contiene lor meritissime laude* (Florence, publisher unknown: ca. 1515), not paginated. On Clarice rivaling Diana and Venus: 'Giurato

a number of actual hunting expeditions for the Pope at his villa in Magliana outside Rome, where he would declaim the fallen stags lucky, compared to his continually pierced heart and its perpetual amorous wound.²⁷ By now, everyone knew that the Duchess of Urbino was Accolti's Beatrice, or rather his Dulcinea. Observers of the Papal Court as esteemed as Pietro Bembo would note Unico's effusive courtships as a matter of course.²⁸ No one appreciated these quixotic performances more than the Pope, before whom Accolti would perform as the headliner of a corps of improvisatory poet-musicians. In a dispatch to Mantua, Castiglione, as ambassador to the Holy See, records a Papal performance where Accolti improvised for three hours before an audience of three hundred spectators.²⁹ Indeed, Leo x bestowed upon Accolti the city of Nepi for a price, to feed the depleted Papal treasury, and here the poet realized his princely ambitions as a petty tyrant. The rule of the self-styled Duca di Nepi would prove to be as capricious as his verse—he notoriously decreed anti-sumptuary laws mandating that young women wear revealing gowns.³⁰ After

harei che la Dea cacciatrice / fussi costei: se non che nelle ciglia / io riconobbi la bella Clarice / che certo Cytherea mi rassomiglia'. The text is attributed to Bernardo Accolti in Kristeller P., *Early Florentine Woodcuts: With an Annotated List of Florentine Illustrated Books* (London: 1897) 24–25, no. 75.

27 Guarnera, *Bernardo Accolti* 110–112; and Gnoli, "Il gran lume" 288–290.

28 In a famous letter to Cardinal Bibbiena documenting the startling life likeness of Raphael's lost portrait of the poet Antonio Tebaldeo (19 April 1516), Pietro Bembo also reports Accolti's continued courtship of Duchess Elisabetta and Donna Emilia Pia at Urbino, and his calculated reluctance to perform for them: 'Le Loro Signorie sono corteggiate dal S. Unico molto spesso; et esso è più caldo dell'ardore antico suo, che dice essere ardore di tre lustri e mezzo, che giammai, e più che mai spera ora di venire a pro de' suoi disii; massimamente essendo stato richiesto dalla Signora Duchessa di dire improvviso, nel quale si fida muovere quel cuor di pietra, in tanto che la farà piangere, non che altro'. See Shearman J., *Raphael in Early Modern Sources (1483–1602)*, 2 vols. (New Haven: 2003) I 240–243; and Bembo P., *Opere in volgare* (Florence: 1961) 641–642.

29 Castiglione, letter to Federico Gonzaga, 6 February 1521, referenced in Cummings, *The Maecenas and the Madrigalist* 83–84; and Guarnera, *Bernardo Accolti* 112.

30 On Accolti's tyranny over Nepi, see Guarnera, *Bernardo Accolti* 113–123; and Gnoli, "Il gran lume" 290–297. As these authors note, in 1534 Paul III stripped Accolti of the title after local uprisings against his cruel governance, for which the poet futilely entreated Pietro Aretino to intercede on his behalf with the Pope; see *Lettere scritte al Signor Pietro Aretino, da molti Signori, Comunità, Donne di valore, Poeti, & altri Eccellentissimi Spiriti*, 2 vols. (Venice, Francesco Marcolini: 1552) I 134–135.

the death of Raphael, the distraught Leo x ceded the painter's house on the Borgo Vecchio to the Accolti brothers, whom he held in equally high esteem.³¹

Raphael, in ensconcing Unico on the slope of Parnassus, makes a subtle jibe by rendering the ever-garrulous Accolti silent, and shows him as if he were ironically gesturing 'ascolti'. This reveals Raphael to be an artist attuned to courtly affairs in Rome, and the poet outrageously prominent therein. Equally savvy in this context, Accolti could summon a sacred muse to achieve a renown at the Papal court far surpassing his prosodic flirtations with Mantuan matriarchs. Indeed, Gadio's dispatches detailing the young Federico's affairs describe Accolti's performance at no less august a setting than a banquet following the opening of the Fifth Lateran Council in May 1512, hosted by Agostino Chigi, where the poet recited his "Capitolo di nostra donna".³² Published as the "Ternale in Laude della gloriosa Vergine Maria" in a 1513 pamphlet and the 1515 *Opera*, the poem became Accolti's most renowned work.³³ We owe the most vivid account of its performance to none other than Pietro Aretino, who later professed to be Unico's poetic successor, a 'secondo aretino'. In a 1548 letter, Pietro recalls that 'never had a poet attained the level at which all kings, princes, and Popes of the time held him'. When word got out that Accolti would recite his sacred verse on feast days, throngs hastened to the Vatican. The leading prelates and citizens of Rome, as well as a contingent of Swiss guards, accompanied the poet to the palace. Upon his arrival, Pope Leo x commanded that every door be opened to admit the surging crowds. Accolti then mesmerized the audience with his "Ternale", the first verses of which read:³⁴

31 Breve of Leo x, dated 26 October 1520, on purchase of Raphael's house by Cardinal Pietro Accolti, in Shearman, *Raphael in Early Modern Sources* 1 622–627; and Gnoli D., "La casa di Raffaello", *Nuova antologia* 93 (1887) 401–423.

32 Luzio, "Federico Gonzaga" 539; Gnoli, "*il gran lume*" 284–285; and Guarnera, *Bernardo Accolti* 103–105.

33 Accolti, *Comedia*, 52v–55v. The poem was originally published as a separate opusculum in 1513: *Ternale in laude della Gloriosa Vergine Maria composto per Messer Bernardo Accolti singularissimo.p.* (Florence, Zanobi della barba: 1513). A rare example is in the British Library.

34 Aretino P., *Il quinto libro delle lettere* (Venice, Comin da Trino di Monferrato: 1550) 29–30, letter to Signore Angulo, secretary to Cardinal Benedetto Accolti the younger, nephew of Unico (November 1548): 'mai Poeta gli fu simile nel grado, che lo tennero tutti i Re, tutti i Principi, e tutti i Pontefici del suo tempo. Né altrimenti, che ne i dí festivi: si serravano le Botteghe, correndo ognuno in castello, tosto che si sapeva che il celeste Bernardo Accolti doveva recitare al conspecto d'infiniti gran Maestri, & Prelati, con solenne luminario di torchi, & accompagnato da la molta guardia di Svizzeri, io fui un tratto mandatogli

Vergine drieto a la prodotta prole	A Virgin behind her self-produced offspring
Si come in saldo vetro ogn'hor si vede	As one always sees the sun enter and exit
Entrar' uscir, senza spezzarlo il sole.	solid glass without corrupting it.
Suprema potesta, suprem' herede	Supreme power and supreme inheritor
De l'universo, a cui l'esser servasti	of the Universe, whose being you kept within
Con suprema humilita suprema fede:	with supreme humility and faith:
Onde a fastigio tal te sublimasti	Whence you exalted yourself to the highest heights
Che Dio in carne in luter tuo felice	So that in your happy vessel, you brought forth
Da la somma ara del ciel reportasti:	God incarnate from the highest altar of the Empyrean.
Et l'impio giugo qual Eva infelice	And the impious yoke through which unhappy Eve
Trasmisse a poster suoi miseri & mesti	transferred her miseries and sorrows to her descendants
Voltasti in ben qual dir ne pensare lice.	You have turned to good what can be said and thought.

da N.S. a ciò si degnasse venire da la sua beatitudine, secondo che me gli haveva fatto promettere: ne prima apparve ne le reverende sale di Pietro, che il buon Vicario di Christo gridò, Aprite quante porte ci sono, & vengano le turbe dentro: imperoche più non udiraſi in queste stanze, lo ammirando & Unico, il quale oltre gli altri versi del ternale in honore di Maria Vergine: fece in modo restare le genti attonite con il dove dice: 'Quel generasti di cui concepisti, portasti quel di cui fosti fattura, & di te nacque quel di cui nascesti'; che sentiſi exclamare da la publica voce d'ognuno, Viva in eterna, un sì divino spiro, & si solo'. Roscoe W., *The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth*, 4 vols. (Liverpool: 1805) III 189–190, confirms that the poem whose performance Pietro Aretino records corresponds to the Ternale printed in the *Opera*. On the relationship between Accolti and Pietro Aretino, see Luzio A., "La famiglia di Pietro Aretino", *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 4 (1884) 381–384; Gnoli, "Il gran lume" 296–298; Romei D., "Dalla Toscana a Roma: Pietro Aretino 'erede' di Bernardo Accolti", in *Pietro Aretino nel cinquecentenario della nascita: atti del convegno*, Centro Pio Ranja (Rome: 1995) 179–195.

Quel generasti di cui concepesti	You generated him whom you conceived
Portasti quel di cui fusti fattura	You carried him by whom you were made
Et di te nacque quel di cui nascesti.	And born of you is Him from whom you were brought forth. ³⁵

After the performance, according to Pietro Aretino, the ravished spectators exclaimed in unison: 'Let such a divine and unique spirit live in eternity!'³⁶ Accolti, evoking the culminating vision of Dante's *Paradiso* and its *terza rima* meter, venerates the eternal beloved surpassing all earthly beauty, whose love admits even the unworthy, and whose grace grants peace rather than sparking desire.³⁷ Indeed, he pilfers some of Dante's paradoxical *chiasmi*, extracted from the narrative context of Saint Bernard presenting the humbled pilgrim to the celestial vision, and subjected to further permutation and elaboration.

Since recitations of the "Ternale" date back to the Lateran Council of the Della Rovere papacy, and even as early as 1510, it is worth considering how Accolti's conceits find parallel in the pictorial imagination of Raphael, who at just that moment devised an unprecedentedly heroic and luminous icon of the Virgin for the very same Pope.³⁸ The *Sistine Madonna*, commissioned by Julius II and painted in 1512–1513, manifests Raphael's exploration of the same incarnational and salvific themes, via the paradox of illusion and reality [Fig. 18.8].³⁹ The parted curtains and parapet create a liminal frame through

35 Accolti, *Comedia* 52v.

36 Aretino, *Il quinto libro delle lettere* 30.

37 Dante, *Paradiso*, ed. – trans. A. Esolen (New York: 2004), Canto 33:1–6: 'Vergine Madre, figlia del tuo figlio, / umile e alta più che creatura, / termine fisso d'eterno consiglio, / tu se' colei che l'umana natura / nobilitasti sì, che 'l suo fattore / non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura' ('Virgin Mother, daughter of your Son, / humbler and loftier past creation's measure, / the fulcrum of the everlasting plan, / your are she who enabled human nature / so highly, that its Maker did not scorn / to make Himself the Creature of His creature').

38 An unpaginated manuscript in the Biblioteca nazionale centrale, Florence (Classe 1X. Cod. 83), contains a transcription of the 'Ternale,' signed 'finito, al di 16 Aprile 1510 / ore 16 [...]. Per me Lionardo Balduccij,' indicating that Accolti's verses were well-known before their publication in the *Opera* of 1515, or the rare pamphlet of 1513.

39 On the *Sistine Madonna* in general, see recently Meyer zur Capellen J., *Raphael: A Critical Catalogue of His Paintings, vol II: The Roman Religious Paintings ca. 1508–1520* (Landshut: 2005) 107–116, no. 53; Henning A. (ed.), *Die Sixtinische Madonna: Raffaels Kultbild wird 500* (Munich: 2012); and Filippi E. – Hasler S. – Schwaetzer H., *La Madonna Sistina di Raffaello: un dialogo nella visione* (Rome: 2013).



FIGURE 18.8 *Raphael, Sistine Madonna (1512–1513). Oil on canvas, 265 × 196 cm. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister.*

PHOTO CREDIT: BPK BILDAGENTUR / (GEMÄLDEGALERIE ALTE MEISTER, STAATLICHE KUNSTSAMMLUNGEN / ELKE ESTEL / HANS-PETER KLUT / ART RESOURCE, NY.

which the dynamic figures, projecting gestures, and the boldly striding Virgin seem to pass, while simultaneously affirming the picture plane. The outward gesture of Saint Sixtus, the cherubs and tiara resting on the ledge, and the forward propulsion of the Madonna bearing the child transgress this virtual boundary. Paralleling the mystery of the Virgin birth, the parturition through an intact membrane, Raphael achieves a miraculous coexistence of spatial penetration and the integrity of the pictorial field. Raphael's visionary epiphany, like Accolti's celebrated verse, visualizes the incarnate Messiah, generated from the self-same grace of the Virginal Vessel, like penetrating rays of light brought down from the highest altar of the empyrean into our space through the parted curtains—a virtual passage that re-inscribes the miraculous parturition of Christ. Much as Accolti rehearses the venerable image of glass penetrated by light rays to figure the miraculous intactness of the Virgin birth, Raphael suspends the radiant forms of the Madonna and her issue within the notionally transparent surface of the picture plane. In Renaissance perspective theory, light rays transect the transparent picture plane and posit the orthogonals of a spatial enclosure, creating a threshold potent with incarnational significance in Annunciation scenes. Raphael instead employs the parted curtains and ledge to transform the plane into a nebulous vision of heaven whence the figures issue, rendering it literally generative. Raphael's clouds, morphing from cherubic ether to cumulous carpet, condense into an opaque if immeasurable scrim that thrusts the Virgin and child forward.⁴⁰ Coincidentally, the woodcut illustration to Accolti's "Ternale" in the rare 1513 pamphlet features a full-length Madonna and Child hovering in a heavenly environment and flanked by

40 These brief musings on the *Sistine Madonna* are part of a larger book project on the relation of pictorial transitivity and Marian corporeality: "Painting as Miraculous Birth: Raphael and the Renaissance Madonna". While the bibliography on the *Sistine Madonna* is vast, suffice it to mention here a few studies that address the pictorial structure of the painting and its theological implications: Berliner R., "Raphaels Sixtinische Madonna als religiöses Kunstwerk", *Das Münster* 11 (1958) 85–102; Eberlein J.K., "The Curtain in Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*", *Art Bulletin* 65 (1983) 61–77; and Rohlmann M., "Raffaels Sixtinische Madonna", *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* 30 (1995) 221–248. On the visionary cherubic clouds, see Kleinbub C., *Vision and the Visionary in Raphael* (University Park, PA: 2011) 23–45. More generally, on the incarnational significance of pictorial thresholds, see Krüger K., *Das Bild als Schleier des Unsichtbaren. Ästhetische Illusion in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit in Italien* (Munich: 2001); Arasse D., *L'Annociation italienne: une histoire de perspective* (Paris: 1999); and the studies gathered in Melion W.S. – Wandel L.P. (eds.), *Image and Incarnation: The Early Modern Doctrine of the Pictorial Image*, *Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture* (Leiden: 2015).

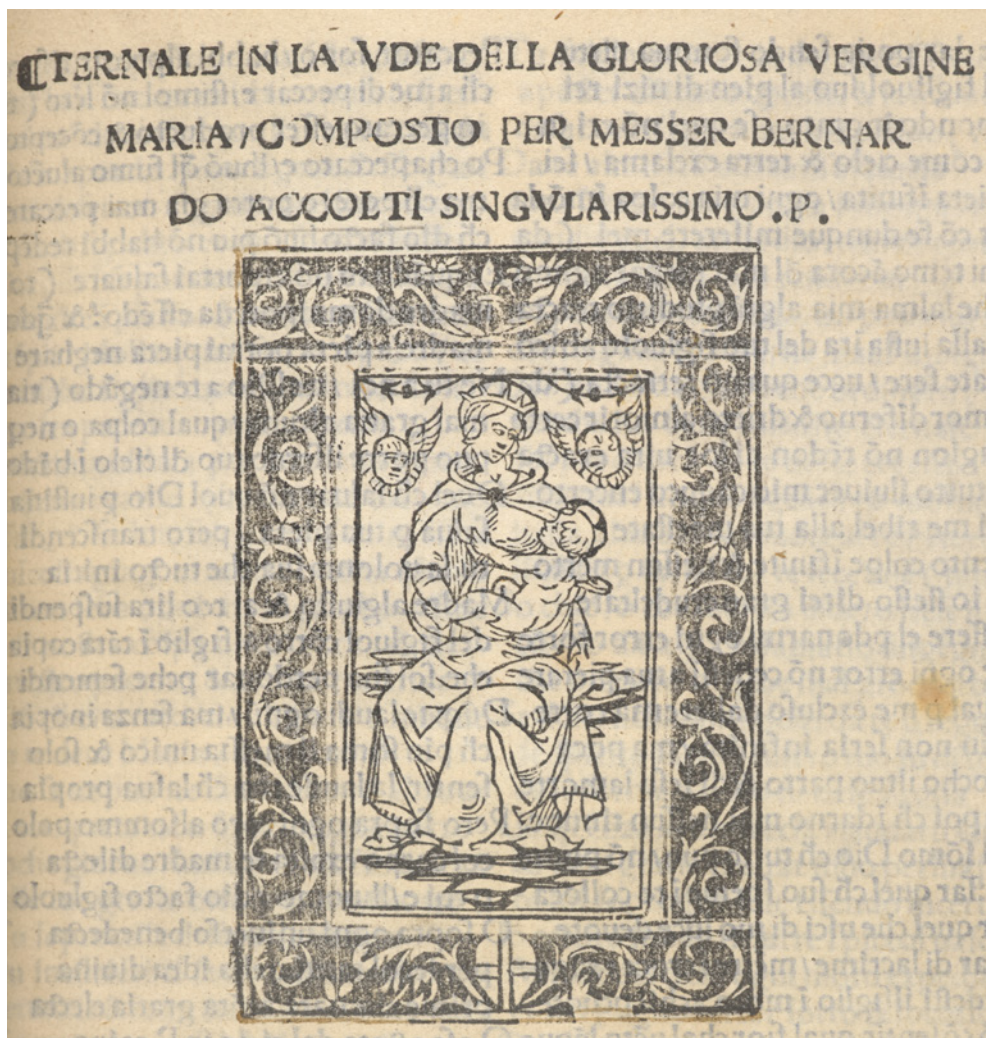


FIGURE 18.9 *Woodcut Illustration to Ternale in laude della Gloriosa Vergine Maria composto per Messer Bernardo Accolti singularissimo.p. (Florence, Zanobi della barba: 1513).*
 ©THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD (11426.C.2. UIN: BLL01000010109).

cherubs within an elaborate frame, perhaps suggesting the mutual inspiration of the painter and the poet he placed on *Parnassus* [Fig. 18.9].⁴¹

Raphael's altarpiece, as the last work commissioned by Pope Julius II, embodies the mysteries of the Incarnation and virgin birth as acts of divine love

41 Kristeller, *Early Florentine Woodcuts* 3, no. 6.

preconditioning Christ's resurrection, and the universal salvation it heralds. As such, some scholars have situated the altarpiece in a specific funerary context. A once prevailing view held that the dissolving threshold of the altarpiece permitted the Madonna to descend from parted tomb curtains out toward the funeral bier of Julius II, as first proposed by Hubert Grimme, and promoted by Walter Benjamin.⁴² While the 1514 record of the altarpiece at the Church of San Sisto in far off Piacenza discourages the hypothesis that the altarpiece literally surmounted a catafalque, this proposal, construed as an intuitive response to the issue of pictorial transitivity, is undeniably sound. Furthermore, the dynamic pose of the Madonna and Child derives from Michelangelo's design for these same figures in the tomb of Julius II [Fig. 18.10]. Given the compositional similarity to Michelangelo's tomb design, Bram Kempers reconstructs a scenario whereby Raphael's painting was part of a planned but never executed Cappella Julia, recorded in Bulls of 1512, to be located in Bramante's new Tribune in Saint Peter's. The painting may have served some temporary purpose in the funerary apparatus, to be supplanted by Michelangelo's tomb sculptures as envisioned in the 1513 contract and scheme, and was later shipped to Piacenza.⁴³ In fact, the entire composition of the *Sistine Madonna* closely resembles the upper portion of the tomb from the earliest designs. Here Michelangelo's Neo-Platonic scheme culminates in the reconciliation of flesh and spirit, and the promise of transcendence, through Christ's birth. This is what Raphael's altarpiece literally depicts, and virtually generates through its transitive pictorial structure, which mediates the passage from measureless effulgence to physical palpability, a process of materialization that parallels the incarnation and issuance of the redemptive body of Christ through Mary.

The parted curtains and lower ledge of the Sistine Madonna establish a liminal zone eliding the depicted apparition into the empirical space of the beholder. Unlike the celestial vision they frame, but do not contain, the curtains with their bowed rod and sliding rings are of this earth. Hans Belting has compared their concreteness to the coverings of icons, with the amorphous cloudscape beyond denoting both the visionary origins of the Madonna icon traced back to Saint Luke, and the artist's *fantasia* as the source of ideal beauty.⁴⁴

42 Grimme H., "Das Rätsel der Sixtinischen Madonna," *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 57 (1922) 41–49. Benjamin W., "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility", in Eiland H. – Jennings M.W. (eds.), *Selected Writings* 4 vols. (Cambridge MA: 2003) IV 274.

43 Kempers B., "Capella Iulia and Capella Sistina: Two Tombs, One Patron, Two Churches", in Benzi F. (ed.), *Sisto IV. Le Arti a Roma nel Primo Rinascimento: Atti del Convegno di Studi* (Rome: 2000) 45–53.

44 Belting H., *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. E. Jephcott (Chicago – London, 1994) 480–484. For further along these lines, with the neblu-



FIGURE 18.10 *Michelangelo*, Design for the Tomb of Pope Julius II della Rovere (1505–1506). Pen and brown ink, over stylus ruling and leadpoint, 51 × 31.9 cm. NEW YORK, THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, ROGERS FUND, 1962 62.93.1.

I would emphasize the theological resonance of the continuum from celestial expanse to corporeal projection to concrete framework as manifesting the incarnational process, the precondition of the sacrificial act of redemption that the altarpiece commemorates. Scholars since Rudolf Berliner and Konrad Eberlein have interpreted the curtains in Raphael's altarpiece as evoking those covering the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple. Now sundered, as the temple veil will be upon Christ's death on the Cross, the curtains signify by revealing the New Age of grace and redemption.⁴⁵ Saint Paul's letter to the *Hebrews* (10:19–20) explicitly states that 'the blood of Jesus makes us free to enter boldly into the [temple] sanctuary by the new living way which he has opened for us through the curtain, the way of his flesh'. As the Virgin strides past the veritable curtains, bearing the fruit (flesh) of her womb as an offering, the omniscient gaze of the Christ Child and the solemn wonder of Mary's countenance register their mutual cognizance and stoic acceptance of the fated passion and its redemptive promise. This is the same message, uttered to great acclaim in the closing months of the papacy of Julius II, by that singular poet situated on the Vatican *Parnassus*. In the "Ternale", Accolti addresses the Madonna confessionally, in the first person—the same kind of deictic dialogue that Raphael's emphatically iconic image instantiates:

Da te ha il miser' via consolatoria,	From you, the wretched has a consoling
	path,
Cura infermo, reo venia: il giusto amor,	the infirm a cure, the sinful a pardon:
	the just have love,
Gaudio angelo, carne dio, trinita Gloria:	the angel joy, God has flesh, and the
	Trinity its glory.

[....]

[....]

E cosi ne a maggior bene ordinati,
 Poi che lui bene infinito eternale
 Sol per crearsi in te volse crearti.

And thus ordered to the greater good
 Since He, the eternal, infinite good
 Yearned to create you only to create
 Himself in you.

ous field functioning as a modern equivalent of such authenticating archaizing formats as mosaic apses, see Nagel A., *The Controversy of Renaissance Art* (Chicago – London, 2011) 83–85.

45 Eberlein, "The Curtain in Raphael's Sistine Madonna"; and Berliner, "Raphael's Sixtinische Madonna".

Dunque qual lingua angelica o mortale	What angelic or mortal tongue
Basta a laudar te madre al Re del tutto	Suffices to laud you mother to the
	King of All
Che sol per farsi in te, te fece tale?	Who only to make himself in you
	made you thus? ⁴⁶

It is significant that Accolti's paean to the Virgin resists any description of her physical beauty, however chaste, and focuses on paradoxes of incarnation, messianic generation, and salvation. This contrasts, of course, with the most famous, even notorious, conception of a Madonna image in relation to the Petrarchan canon of lyrical beauty: Parmigianino's *Madonna of the Long Neck* [Fig. 18.11]. Elizabeth Cropper has analyzed Parmigianino's appropriation of the panoply of Petrarchan pulchritude, comparing his conception of Mary to the prescriptive ideal of feminine beauty to be found in Firenzuola's *Dialogo delle bellezze delle donne* (1548). The *Madonna of the Long Neck* embodies the Virgin's singularity beyond mortal women precisely by miraculously consolidating the dispersed beauties of the Petrarchan canon within an ideally artificial figure, denoting a kind of spiritual fulfillment that transcends the deferred desire intrinsic to the lyric mode.⁴⁷ Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*, while forged in the same poetic tradition, conveys an innate *grazia* and humble grandeur that belies such overwrought consolidation. Raphael achieves a truly 'alto concetto' of beauty, but one very different from Simone's portrait of Petrarch's Laura, since, as a veritable celestial vision, she fulfills the ardent desire, not of amorous possession, but of transcendent salvation. Her form materializes and hovers within a liminal pictorial space that embodies the paradox of intactness and transgression that correlate to Accolti's poetic figures in the "Ternale". For Dante, there is little question that this epiphany is the supreme act of love: 'In your womb was reignited the flame of that love / through whose warmth this flower spawned / To its full bloom in everlasting peace'.⁴⁸ In Raphael, this amorous dispensation reveals itself through the very ontology of painting. For Accolti, the language of love, whether in sacred or lyrical verse, finds expression not in description, but in the conceptual play of the text and the states of reverence or desolation that animate this unique witness to beauty.

46 Accolti, *Comedia*, 55r.

47 Cropper, "On Beautiful Women" 382–386.

48 Dante, *Paradiso*, Canto 33:7–9: 'Nel ventre tuo si raccese l'amore, / per lo cui caldo ne l'eterna pace / così è germinato questo fiore' (my translation).



FIGURE 18.11 *Parmigianino, Madonna of the Long Neck (1537). Oil on panel, 216 × 132 cm. Florence, Galleria degl'Uffizi.*

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PART 8

Picturing Love in the Marketplace



“For Love and Money. The Circulation of Value and Desire in Abraham Ortelius’s *Album amicorum*”

Joanna Woodall

And the reason is that human nature was originally one and we were a whole, and the desire and pursuit of the whole is called love.

The speech of Aristophanes, the author of comedic plays, in Plato’s *Symposium*.¹



1 Abraham Ortelius’s *Album amicorum*

Among the treasures of the library of Pembroke College, Cambridge is a small, later sixteenth-century ‘album amicorum’ [Fig. 19.1].² It is one example of the numerous books of friends compiled by the educated elites of early modern Europe, particularly in the German- and Dutch-speaking regions.³ Just about four inches wide in portrait format,⁴ this volume belonged to Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598), the renowned Antwerp humanist, merchant, businessman, collector and, from 1573, official geographer to King Philip II of Spain

This essay is dedicated to Walter Melion and the members of the Lovis Corinth Symposium 2015.

- 1 Jowett B. (trans.), *The Symposium of Plato* 192e–193a. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1600/1600-h/1600-h.htm> (accessed 10-10-2016). See also Allen R.E. (trans. and comment.), *The Dialogues of Plato. Volume II The Symposium* (New Haven – London: 1991) 31, 133.
- 2 Ortelius Abraham, *Album amicorum*, Cambridge, Pembroke College Library MS LC.2.113. An introduction, bibliography and high quality images of the entire volume are accessible at University of Cambridge Digital Library (CUDL) “Album Amicorum of Abraham Ortelius (MS LC.2.113)”: <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-LC-00002-00113/1> (accessed 23-06-17). I am very grateful to Patricia Aske, the Librarian at Pembroke College, Cambridge, for her generosity in assisting my research.
- 3 Schlueter J., *The Album Amicorum and the London of Shakespeare’s Time* (London: 2011) 8–28.
- 4 The volume measures 16 × 11 cm (sextodecimo). Harris J., “The Practice of Community: Humanist Friendship during the Dutch Revolt”, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 47, 4 (2005) 299–325, 301.

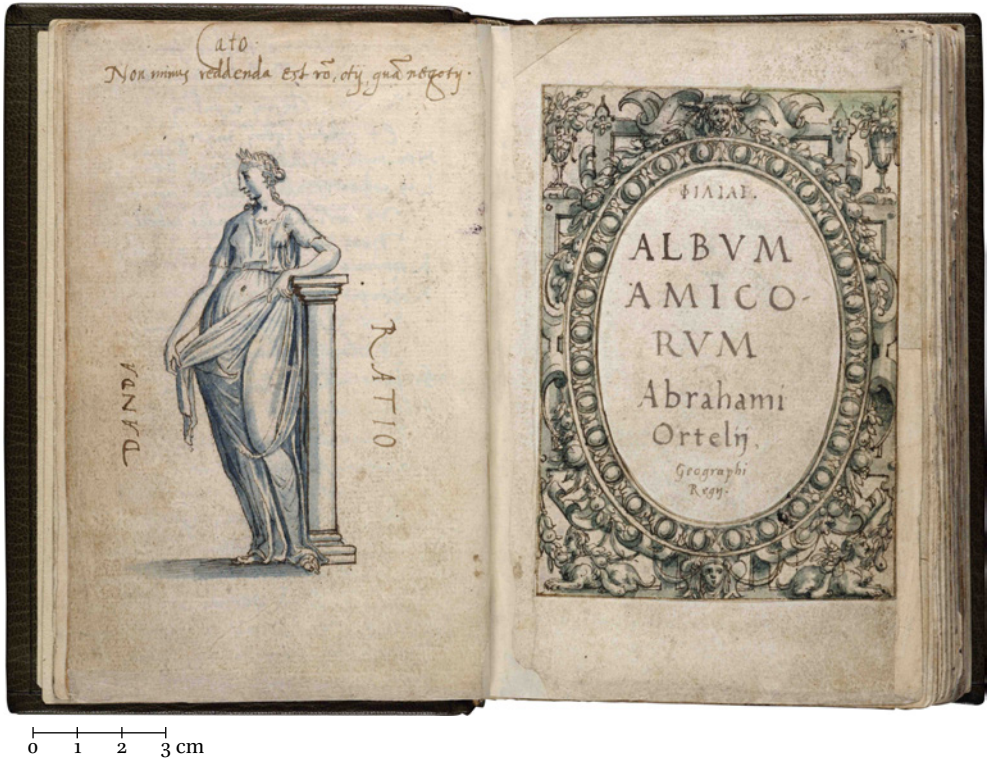


FIGURE 19.1 Opening and title piece of Abraham Ortelius, *Album Amicorum*, fol. 4v–5r (with laid-down ink and wash drawing of the frame for the title page of Abraham Ortelius, *Deorum dearumque capita ex vetustis numismatibus in gratiam antiquitatis studiosorum effigiata et edita*, Antwerp, Philips Galle: 1573). COURTESY OF CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, PEMBROKE COLLEGE COLLECTION (MS. LC 2.113).

(1527–1598).⁵ The little book now sports a plain modern cover but the original calf leather binding would probably have been stamped, tooled and perhaps gilded.⁶ The manuscript currently consists of 126 folios, the majority of them

5 For Ortelius's appointment as royal geographer and the initiation of the *Album*: Harris, "Humanist Friendship" 304. For a succinct biography of Ortelius: Early Modern Letters Online (EMLO), "Depuydt J. et al, "The Correspondence of Abraham Ortelius": <http://emlo-portal.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections/?catalogue=abraham-ortelius> (accessed 27-09-16).

6 Schleuter, *The Album Amicorum* 8. A fragment of a previous binding of gilded and tooled leather is bound into the back cover of the book.

paper but including a few offerings on vellum.⁷ Although it was conceived and owned by Ortelius, it can also be understood as a collaborative work of art, made up of a huge variety of texts and images written, designed and contributed by the individuals counted amongst Ortelius's international networks of friends. It is both the creation of a community and an intimate, personal object made to be handled, an object of desire.

As the social media of the early modern period, 'alba amicorum' have recently become the subject of renewed attention.⁸ Beautiful, tactile, identified with a famous figure and encompassing many notable friends, it is not surprising that Ortelius's *Album amicorum* has been of more longstanding interest. In 1969 Jean Puraye, assisted by twelve collaborators, published a facsimile edition in French which has formed the foundation of much of the further work on the book.⁹ It has recently been supplemented by Marcel van den Broecke's publication, which includes a digital reproduction of the entire manuscript

7 There are 137 entries. The index completed by Ortelius's heir, Jacobs Cools Ortelius (1563–1628), on 26 January 1596 indicates that some ten pages are missing and some entries were added after the index was initially made. Depuydt J., "Le cercle d'amis et de correspondants autour d'Abraham Ortelius", in Karrow R. (ed.), *Abraham Ortelius 1527–1598: cartograph et humaniste* (Turnhout: 1998) 117–140, 119–120; Harris, "Humanist Friendship" 301; Harris J., "Het *Album Amicorum* van Abraham Ortelius: codicologie en verzameling", in *De Gulden Passer* 83 (2005) 117–135, 124; Broecke M. van den, *Abraham Ortelius 1527–1598. Life, Works, Sources and Friends* (Bilthoven: 2015) 338–342. My analysis does not depend on the original number and order of the pages.

8 Wilson B., "Social Networking. The 'Album amicorum' and Early Modern Public Making", in Rospocher M. (ed.), *Beyond the Public Sphere. Opinions, Publics, Spaces in Early Modern Europe*. Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento/Jahrbuch des italienisch-deutschen historischen Instituts in Trient 27, 2012 (Bologna – Berlin: 2012) 205–225 with further literature and comparative colour illustrations of other albums; Schepper M. de – Fabri R. – Velde H. van de, *In vriendschap verbonden. Het Liber Amicorum of het vriendenboekje in de 16e eeuw en de 17e eeuw in de Nederlanden* (Antwerp: 2013); Giorgievska-Shine A., "The Album Amicorum and the Kaleidoscope of the Self. Notes on the Friendship Album of Jacob Heybloq", in Melion W.S. – Rothstein B. – Weeman M. (eds.), *The Anthropomorphic Lens. Anthropomorphism, Microcosmism and Analogy in Early Modern Thought and Visual Arts*. Intersections: Interdisciplinary studies in early modern culture 34 (2014) 179–206; Bass M.A., "Flowers for Friends: The Origins of the Flower Still Life in the Early Modern Netherlands", in *Festschrift for David Freedberg* (forthcoming).

9 Puraye J. et al., *Abraham Ortelius Album Amicorum. Édition Facsimilé avec notes et traduction* (Amsterdam: 1969). Puraye's edition contains an introduction, annotated translations of the inscribed texts and short biographies of the contributors but does not provide transcriptions of the texts and the translations are often paraphrases. The pagination of the *Album* also differs from the manuscript: fol.1r in Puraye, *Album* = fol. 2r. etc. in Ortelius, *Album*.

and English translations of the inscriptions.¹⁰ As with many 'alba amicorum', the named and dated entries have assisted scholars in reconstructing the biographies of the owner and his web of contacts within the republic of letters. Joost Depuydt's work on Ortelius is fundamental in this respect.¹¹ More recently, the historian and neo-Latinist Jason Harris has published two important articles on the volume, one of which focuses on its codicology and cultural significance, the other on the function and purpose of Ortelius's friendship networks, as evidenced by his *Album amicorum*, during the insecure and often tumultuous years of the revolt of the Netherlands against Philip II of Spain.¹²

My own contribution works with this indispensable previous scholarship, offering a first attempt to analyse the album as a work of art that, whilst an example of a much larger genre, is also identifiable with a particular man and community centred in the Low Countries in the second half of the sixteenth century. It explores ways in which, under the remit of universal, Christian love, the creation, content and visual character of this artefact both acknowledged individual difference and variety and worked to sustain a sense of community and universal harmony amongst the humanist elites during this troubled period. It goes on to suggest that, as humanists inspired by the wisdom and culture of antiquity, Ortelius and the contributors to his album are likely to have known the classic texts on friendship and Plato's famous dialogue on love, the *Symposium*, which discussed the potentially fraught relationship between the virtuous, elevated, 'heavenly' form of Eros and personal physical and material fulfilment. They would also have had access to the influential Christian and allegorical reworking of the *Symposium* by the Florentine scholar, Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), in which anxiety about physical contact with the object of desire is more evident.

The second half of the article consists of a close analysis of selected contributions to Ortelius's album, and their relationship to Ortelius's numismatic publication of 1573 entitled *Deorum dearumque capita ex vetustis numismatibus in gratiam antiquitatis studiosorum effigiata et edita*. It is suggested that

10 Broecke, *Ortelius* 303–342.

11 Depuydt, "Le cercle d'amis" and Early Modern Letters Online (EMLO), Depuydt J., "The Correspondence of Abraham Ortelius", <http://emlo-portal.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections/?catalogue=abraham-ortelius> (accessed 27-09-16). Depuydt, "Le cercle d'amis" 122–140 for the places and dates of birth and death, the interests and professions and a short bibliography of Ortelius's known contacts, including the contributors to the *Album amicorum*. See also Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren (DBNL): <http://www.dbnl.org/> (accessed 27-09-16) for further literature on many of them.

12 Harris, "Het *Album Amicorum*"; Harris, "Humanist Friendship".

in the album, the complex, at times contradictory and risky impulses of 'love' are manifested through forms of visual and textual juxtaposition and 'double-sidedness' similar to coins. Value is produced through practices of circulation and exchange comparable to currency and more intangible concepts of money. These 'numismatic' strategies involved both recognition of distinct 'facets' and their unification in a single whole. They offered ways of separating 'spiritual love' from, and at the same time maintaining its connection to, physical love and material fulfilment. On a macrocosmic level, heaven and earth could be recognised as distinct realms, but their ultimate unity under the authority of God could be sustained. It is argued that a Christian humanist, mercantile subjectivity, produced through exchange, enabled Ortelius and the community of contributors to his album to reconcile the attainment of stability with the endless, mobile play of desire.

The genesis of the album took a quarter of a century. The earliest of more than 130 surviving contributions—all but one of them by men—dates from January 1574, when Ortelius was 47; the latest to 1596, two years before his death aged 71. Ortelius himself contributed six entries on behalf of friends (five of them posthumous), in his beautiful, controlled, italic hand.¹³ The entries donated by others typically parallel a dedication to Ortelius with the name of the contributor, a place and date. Some contributions were made by visitors to Ortelius's home in Antwerp, others were sent to him or inserted elsewhere; Ortelius presumably took the little book with him on his many travels. In the entries, Ortelius is often characterised as a renowned 'geographus' in recognition of his immensely successful *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, first published in 1570.¹⁴ Some dedications also mention the metier of the contributor. For example, two cartouches set within the elaborate frame of a coat of arms are inscribed in Latin: 'Abraham Ortelius of Antwerp, Geographer, is embraced by John Dee of London, Mathematician, with a Philosophical Love' and 'The Year of our Lord 1577, In the Fiftieth Year of His Age' [Fig. 19.2].¹⁵ The metaphor of

13 Including the well-known dedication to Pieter Bruegel the Elder (ca. 1525/30–1569). Ortelius, *Album* 13v.

14 Ortelius Abraham, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Antwerp, Gilles Coppens van Diest: 1570), translated and expanded in 31 editions by 1612.

15 John Dee (1527–1608). Ortelius, *Album* 90r. 'Abrahamum Ortelium Antwerpianum/ Joannes Dee Londinensis/ Geographum, Mathematicum/Philosophico complectitur Amore./Anno Domini M D L X X V I I/ Aetatis Suae Anno Quinquagesimo'. The Greek and Latin inscription around Dee's coat of arms reads in translation: 'God Jehova is my force. It is to lose him that I fear.' Broecke, *Ortelius* 325.



FIGURE 19.2 *Entry for John Dee (1527–1608), 1577, Abraham Ortelius, Album Amicorum, fol. 90r (with laid-down ink and wash drawing of the frame for ‘Castor and Pollux’ in Deorum Dearumque Capita).*

COURTESY OF CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, PEMBROKE COLLEGE COLLECTION (MS. LC 2.113).

an embrace epitomises the way in which the entries address Ortelius as if he is actually present and capable of a personal exchange.¹⁶

Most of the dedications are accompanied by offerings to Ortelius comprising a rich variety of laudatory texts, often in combination with or juxtaposed to images. There are mottos, encomia, different sorts of poems and more informal texts with an epistolary character, coats of arms and portraits, exemplary and allegorical scenes, emblems, printers and typographic devices, even a rebus.¹⁷

16 Ortelius visited Dee in London on 12 March 1577. Baldwin R., “John Dee’s interest in the application of nautical science, mathematics and law to English naval affairs”, in Clucas S. (ed.), *John Dee: interdisciplinary studies in Renaissance thought* (Dordrecht: 2006) 97–130, 98.

17 Ortelius, *Album* 105v. The rebus, contributed by Zacharias Heyns (1566–1630), was deciphered by C.P. Burger, Librarian of the University of Amsterdam, in a letter dated 9 January 1912 now in Pembroke Library. See also Broecke, *Ortelius* 329.

Latin is predominant but this and other ancient and foreign languages occasionally rub shoulders with vernacular Dutch, and in one case French.¹⁸ Most of the texts have an explicit visual presence on the page, constituted by their placement, format and calligraphy, which ranges from Roman capitals through humanist miniscule and italic to regional and local scripts and more personal hands.¹⁹ Some contributions are written or drawn directly on the leaves of the book, others are separate sheets laid down on the folios, forming a meticulous collage.

2 Aspects of Love in Sixteenth-century Antwerp

By the second half of the sixteenth century love was becoming recognised in the Netherlands as the highest motive for art, subsuming honour and profit.²⁰ In order to explore the character of Ortelius's manuscript as a work of art, rather than an historical document, it is therefore useful to consider in some detail why it should be considered under the remit of love. It is an 'album amicorum', after all, not an 'album amatorum'. An immediate justification for doing so is the use of terms and imagery of love and endearment in some of the entries. John Dee's contribution, quoted above, speaks of embracing Ortelius with a 'Philosophical Love'. The Leiden humanist and statesman Jan van der Does alias Janus Dousa (1545–1609) began his long Latin poem dedicated to the spirit of friendship by describing the album as a treasury of good comprising imprinted images and inscribed names of the 'seers' ('vates') whom love has bound to Ortelius. Dousa pointedly juxtaposed the words 'amor' and 'amici' by placing them at the end of consecutive lines.²¹ Joined hands, a sign

18 The French entry was the only contribution from a woman, Catarina Heyns: Ortelius, *Album* 118v.

19 On the calligraphic character of *Alba amicorum*: Wilson, "Social Networking" 211.

20 Woodall J., "Love is in the Air. *Amor* as motivation and message in seventeenth-century Netherlandish painting", *Art History* 19, 2 (1996) 208–246; Woodall J., "Wtewael's Perseus and Andromeda: looking for love in seventeenth century Dutch painting", in Arscott C. – Scott K. (eds.), *Manifestations of Venus. Art and Sexuality* (Manchester: 2000) 39–68; Nevitt Jr. H.R., *Art and the Culture of Love in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (Cambridge: 2003). On the importance of love for the doctrine and character of the image in the Netherlands, see the work of Walter Melion, in particular Melion W.S., "Venus/Venius: on the Artistic Identity of Otto van Veen and his doctrine of the Image", in McKeown S. (ed.), *Otto Vaenius and his Emblem Books* Glasgow Emblem Studies 15 (Glasgow: 2012) 1–53.

21 Ortelius, *Album* 84r: 'Mirabar, quidnam adventus mihi ferret Aquani/Thesaurum nobis attulit ille boni;/Signatas Tabulas, inscriptaque nomina vatum,/Foedere sacrato quos tibi vinxit amor./Attulit, & dixit: Album communis amici [...]' Dousa names another

more conventional expressions of friendship indicates that there is no rigid boundary in the work between friendship and love.

In the Christian communion, all positive human relationships are modelled on divine love (*agape*).²³ A second reason for thinking about this particular album in relation to love is that its heart lay in Ortelius's home town of Antwerp, where Christian love worked ideologically to justify tolerance and peaceful co-existence as means of negotiating religious and political differences and divisions during the second half of the sixteenth century. In the wake of the sack of Rome in 1527, and the destruction of the hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church by Protestant criticisms and beliefs, the canonical *City of God* by Saint Augustine of Hippo (354–430) was especially relevant in articulating the possibility of an urban space founded on grace and virtue, and governed by divine love. Peace and harmony prevailed in this New Jerusalem, where earth and heaven were re-united and human beings could live forever in perfect happiness and fulfilment. The alternative was a Babylon alienated from God, whose inhabitants were governed by animal lust, riven by conflict and absolutely condemned to death. This negative exemplum was particularly pertinent in sixteenth-century Antwerp, whose extraordinary economic growth offered its rapidly increasing, cosmopolitan population unparalleled opportunities to indulge its material desires.²⁴

Faced by unprecedented change and uncertainty, some members of the elites close to Ortelius became associated in some way, and at some points, with the Family of Love, a mystical sect founded in Emden, East Friesland, by

Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek 8 (Brussels: 1979) 915–916. Available online at http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/retroboeken/nbwv/#source=8&page=465&accessor=accessor_index (accessed 09-10-16); Schuddeboom C., *Philips van Winghe (1560–1592) en het ontstaan van de Christelijke Archeologie* (Haren: 1996); Meganck T., *Erudite Eyes: Friendship, Art and Erudition in the Network of Abraham Ortelius* (Leiden: 2017) 33–34; Oryshkevich I., “Through a Netherlandish Looking-Glass: Philips van Winghe and Jean L’Heureux in the Catacombs”, *Fragmenta. Journal of the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome* 5 (2011) 101–120.

23 For a useful, succinct discussion of the forms of love that have been distinguished in the western philosophical tradition (*eros*, *philia*, *agape*): The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/love/> (accessed 01-10-16); Cooksey T.L., *Plato’s Symposium. A Reader’s Guide* (London – New York: 2010) 10–11.

24 Morra J., “Utopia lost: allegory, ruins and Pieter Bruegel’s Towers of Babel”, *Art History* 30, 2 (2007) 198–216; Woodall J., “Lost in Translation. Thinking about Classical and Vernacular Art in Antwerp 1540–1580”, in Ramakers B. (ed.), *Understanding Art in Antwerp. Classicising the Popular, Popularising the Classic (1540–1580)*. Groeningen Studies in Cultural Change 45. (Louvain: 2011) 1–24.

Hendrik Niclaes (ca. 1501–ca. 1580) in the early 1540s. It has been argued that Ortelius himself belonged to this secretive group, which asserted the presence of Christ's spirit in the believer and the pursuit of inward fusion with the unity of God. This would ultimately inaugurate a new era in which Churches and their sacraments would fall away as all united in the service of love. In 1573, around the time the *Album amicorum* was initiated, a split in the sect resulted in a strand of Familism attractive to Antwerp humanists which, in emphasising self-knowledge, piety and compliance with established churches for the sake of peace and harmony, could involve dissimulation.²⁵

In his detailed and subtle analysis of Ortelius's religious position, Jason Harris has argued that the evidence for Ortelius's active membership in the Family of Love is inconclusive, although he was close to people involved with the sect and shared its emphasis on the love of God which transcended sectarian differences and engaged directly with individuals. Along with some of his contemporaries, his faith was characterised by: 'disregard for confessional boundaries, insistence on internal rather than external devotion, willingness to dissimulate rather than face martyrdom, and a temperamental affinity with eirenicism.'²⁶ Both Ortelius and the Family of Love were, after all, formed within the fluid and yet repressive and risky religious politics of the mid-sixteenth century. Late in his life, in 1593, Ortelius wrote under a pseudonym to a Protestant nephew in dismissive response to him not coming to stay in his formally Catholic household: 'I suppose that religion, which binds all good people, also binds you; it binds me too, but not to a place, or to a time, or to men, but to God only, having no part of these.'²⁷

25 For arguments that Ortelius belonged to, or was associated with, the Family of Love, Mangani G., "Abraham Ortelius and the hermetic meaning of the cordiform projection", in *Imago Mundi* 50 (2008) 59–83; Hamilton A., *The Family of Love* (Cambridge: 1981) 70–77.

26 Harris J., "The Religious Position of Abraham Ortelius" in Gelderblom A.J. – Jong J.L. de – Vaeck M. van (eds.), *The Low Countries as a Crossroads of Religious Beliefs* (Leiden: 2004) 89–139, 135 and passim. See also Harris, "Humanist Friendship" 307–312.

27 Translated in Harris, "Religious Position" 125 and Harris, "Humanist Friendship" 309: 'Invitaveram te apud nos, mansione. Excusatum autem te habeo. Ligat te, puto, que ligat omnes bonos; religio nempe. Ligat et hec me: at minime ad locum, tempus, aut homines. Ad Deum tantum, expertem horum.' Hessels J.H. (ed.), *Abrahami Ortelii (geographi Antverpiensis) et virorum eruditorum ad eundem et ad Jacobum Colium Ortelianum (Abrahami Ortelii sororis filium) epistulae*. [...] (Cambridge: 1887) no. 228, 546–7. Ortelius goes on to say that he will now consider leaving his possessions to someone else. Harris, "Religious Position" 321 n. 47 notes that the pseudonym, 'Bartolus Aramejus,' was an anagram of Ortelius's name.

Despite the mortal dangers of heresy on both sides of the reformation divide, Ortelius's album of friends participates in this liberal idea of a loving fellowship or communion that, focussing on the divine trinity, transcends and reconciles the differences and difficulties of ordinary time and place. As a collaborative work that includes contributions from men of a whole variety of religious persuasions over a long period, its very creation combined the name of Ortelius with an expression of community as a work-in-progress that encompasses difference. Many of the entries emphasise supreme, all-encompassing Christian love, often through the symbolism of light.²⁸ For example, in the circular emblem contributed by the Calvinist sympathiser Zacharias Heyns (1566–1638), Faith, Hope and Love (Charity) guide a nude masculine figure towards the heavens illuminated by the 'Chi-Rho', an abstract symbol of the incarnate Christ, King of Peace. The motto is 'Sic itur ad Astra' ('Thus one reaches the stars').²⁹ The 'Chi-Rho' is also depicted with the motif of clasped hands and the motto 'Amor mutuus' ('Mutual love') in the small, circular emblem signed and dated 1st March 1587 by the twenty-seven year-old Nicholas Rockox (1560–1640), later a friend and patron of Rubens (1577–1640).³⁰

28 The list of 978 scholars and collectors who assisted Ortelius's contemporary and friend Hubert Goltzius during his numismatic research while travelling through the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and France in 1558–1560 shows similar disregard for confessional boundaries. Cunnally J., *Images of the Illustrious. The Numismatic Presence in the Renaissance* (Princeton: 1999) 44. The list was published in Goltzius Hubert, *C. Julius Caesar Sive Historiae Imperatorum Caesarumque Romanorum Ex Antiquis Numismatibus Restitutae* (Bruges, Hubert Goltzius: 1562–3). Harris, "Religious Position" 124, 135 suggests that Ortelius was influenced by Sebastian Franck, a Lutheran pastor (d. 1542) who had suffered persecution for calling for toleration and mutual respect among all faiths. Goltzius made a visit to the heirs of Sebastian Franck.

29 Ortelius, *Album* 106r. The entry is unsigned and undated but the emblem is also the device of Zacharias Heyns's publishing house at the sign of 'The three virtues' in Amsterdam. Puraye, *Album* 80. Compare the frontispiece of Heynes Pieter, *Le Miroir des Mesnagers* (Amsterdam, At the Sign of the Three Virtues: 1595). In his letter of 9th January 1912 to the Librarian of Pembroke College (see above note 17) C.P. Burger notes the use of the Chi-Rho in the album and the Hebrew symbol for Jehova in the printer's device. The Chi-Rho also appears in Zacharias Heyns' rebus: Ortelius, *Album* 105v. and, twice, in the contribution of 15 January 1573 from Zacharias's father Pieter (1537–1598): Ortelius, *Album* 8r. Heyns's contribution, inscribed in Dutch within a pyramid, implies that Ortelius's elevated goal and foundation stone (Pieter) is the Chi-Rho. For an English translation of the inscription: Broecke, *Ortelius* 306.

30 Ortelius, *Album* 28r. On Ortelius's relationship with Rockox: Velde H. Van de, "Amor Mutuus, wederzijdse toewijding. Abraham Ortelius en Nicolaas Rockox", in Imhof D. – Velde H. Van de, *Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598). In de ban van de klassieke oudheid*

Ortelius identified himself with the 'Chi-Rho'. It appears on the very first page of the *Album amicorum*, flanked by the letters Alpha and Omega and with the motto 'Vitae Scopus' ('The goal of life').³¹ The symbol also crowns the oval frame of the portrait of Ortelius produced by Philips Galle (1537–1612) for the 1579 edition of *Theatrum orbis terrarum*.³² When Galle, an unorthodox Catholic, made his own contribution to the album, he chose a drawing of Christ's head in profile with a Dutch dedication to Ortelius that invokes the famous Biblical metaphor of divine love being accessible only through the illusion created by light in a mirror: 'If Christ is the goal towards which our desires strive, what can I give you better than an image of his visage? This is nothing but a shadow, but the immaculate image [that] you love: that is his miraculous life.'³³

As humanists deeply interested in the wisdom and culture of the ancient world, Ortelius and his community of friends would also have known that classical authorities discussed friendship within the discourse of love. The schooling of elite boys in Latin and in rhetoric meant that many of them would have read Aristotle on friendship and the dialogue on friendship between men by the great Roman orator Cicero.³⁴ Cicero points out that the word 'amicitia' is derived from 'amor' and claims that the full sympathy which is true friendship can be passionate and is inspired by 'a gleam of virtue'.³⁵ Friendship is

(Antwerp: 2015) 53–86. For another example of the Chi-Rho: Ortelius, *Album* 67r. Marcus Gheeraerts, 1577.

31 Ortelius, *Album* 2r.

32 Harris, "Het *Album Amicorum*" 119–120 n. 10. For the portrait: Sellink M. – Leesberg M. (comp.) – Sellink M. (ed.), *The New Hollstein: Dutch and Flemish etchings, engravings and woodcuts 1450–1700. Philips Galle Part IV* (Rotterdam: 2001) no. 659, 149; The Chi-Rho was used in imperial numismatics. Grigg R., "Symphōnian Aeidō tēs Basileias': An Image of Imperial Harmony on the Base of the Column of Arcadius", *The Art Bulletin* 59, 4 (1977) 469–482.

33 Ortelius, *Album* 15r. 'Is Christus het Witt daer u begheeren na streckt, Wat can ick u beters dan syns beelds beeld gheven? / Dits niet dan schaduwe, maer dwesen onbevleckt, / Bemint ghy; dat is sijn Wonderdadich leven.' Compare 1 Corinthians 13: 12–13: 'For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.' For Galle's religious position: Roey J. van, "Het boek-bedrijf te Antwerpen in 1584–1585", *De Gulden Passer* 66–67 (1988–1989) 419–433, 427.

34 Burke P., "Humanism and Friendship in Sixteenth-Century Europe" in Haseldine J. (ed.), *Friendship in Medieval Europe* (Stroud: 1999) 262–274, 265.

35 Powell J.G.F. (intro., trans., comment.), *Cicero: Laelius, On Friendship (Laelius De Amicitia) and The Dream of Scipio (Somnium Scipionis)* (Warminster: 1990) line 26, 40, 41; line 27, 42, 43.

strengthened by proximity but the power of virtue enables men to feel affection even for those who have died, or are distant in time and space. Whilst true friendship is founded in love, it is accepted that such friendship can also be socially and materially beneficial. Discussion centres, in fact, on maintaining the proper relationship between the two impulses to connection, which are, crudely put, 'love' and 'money'.

As Elizabeth Honig, Matt Kavaler, Jeroen Vandommele and others have shown, the compatibility of virtue and commerce was a live issue in booming mid-sixteenth-century Antwerp.³⁶ It seems likely to have been personally important to Abraham Ortelius because he was an astute and wealthy businessman and merchant, as well as pursuing an ambitious intellectual agenda and aspiring to spiritual virtue. In his analysis of the *Album amicorum*, Jason Harris demonstrates that, during the uncertain and dangerous times in which Ortelius lived, friendship networks (which often overlapped with kinship networks) provided not only personal intimacy and trust but also financial and social security.³⁷ Citing Cicero, 'in hope and fear', Rockox's entry in the album says that 'Because human things are fragile and liable to fall, we must always acquire those whom we value and whom are valued by us.'³⁸ Love as friendship was thus not incompatible with material concerns—on the contrary, it was a means of generating stability and well-being in the broadest possible sense. Harris also makes the crucial point that for Ortelius, and other merchant-humanists like him, the pursuit of intellectual interests with an international group of friends and associates was inseparable from the practice of trade. The value of 'love', defined as an impulse to *connect* across distance and difference was (and is) as important in commercial dealings as in coping with confessional and political divisions.³⁹ In Ortelius's home town of Antwerp, it was by

36 Honig E.A., *Painting and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp* (New Haven – London: 1998) 6–13 and passim; Vandommele J., *Als in een spiegel: vrede, kennis en gemeenschap op het Antwerpse Landjuweel van 1561* (Hilversum: 2011) 302–338; Bussels S. – Vandommele J., "Coopliden die rechtveerdich handelen eenpaer". Coornhert en de gouvernementele koopman in het zestiende-eeuwse Antwerpen", in: Gruppelaar J. – Pieters J. (eds.), *Réponse à un certain Hollandais: D.V. Coornhert over de grenzen van zijn tijd* (Hilversum: 2014) 143–166; Kavaler E.M., *Pieter Bruegel. Parables of Order and Enterprise* (Cambridge – New York: 1999) 32–48.

37 Harris, "Humanist Friendship" 304–307.

38 Ortelius, *Album* 28r: 'Quoniam res humanae fragiles caducaeq. sunt, semper aliqui acquirendi sunt quos diligamus e[t] a quib. diligamur: [...]'. Rockox signs 'Spe e[t] metu'. Compare Broecke, *Ortelius* 311.

39 Vandommele J., "Herewith the poet doth reveal! The poetical pageant of the Antwerp Landjuweel of 1561 as an innovative transmitter of the concept of harmony", in Vries A. de

the mid-sixteenth century already understood that differences in geographical location, social status, culture, language, confession and even faith could be transcended in the common pursuit of 'fortune' or 'goods'—words whose material and symbolic meanings were not as yet opposed. A motto adopted by Ortelius in the earlier part of his career was, for example, 'virtuti fortuna comes' ('fortune companion to virtue').⁴⁰

Questions of the relationship between spiritual love and material or physical experience are also central to the Platonic tradition, which was of course integral to Christian theology. Plato's *Symposium*, a drinking party in which love is examined from different points of view in a series of wonderful speeches, was translated into Latin and published in Basel by Janus Cornarius (1500–1558), a friend of Erasmus (1466–1536), in 1548.⁴¹ This was in part a result of the scholarly interest in Plato generated by Marsilio Ficino and his associates in Florence in the 1460s, which extended to the Netherlands during the following century.⁴² Loose parallels can be drawn between the collective character and rhetorical concerns of Plato's symposium, Ficino's 'academy' and Ortelius's *Album amicorum*, and all three were profoundly concerned with relationships between elite men as the epitome of human love.⁴³ Masculine friendship was personally significant to Ortelius, who remained unmarried and childless, and it is notable that, as in the *Symposium*, his *Album amicorum* includes just one contribution from a woman, Catarina Heyns (fl.1579), the sister of Zacharias

(ed.), *Cultural Mediators. Artists and writers on the crossroads of tradition, innovation and reception in the Low Countries and Italy, 1450–1650* (Louvain: 2008) 161–180. Kaplan B.J., *Divided by Faith. Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge – London: 2007) esp. Chapter 5, "The Gold Coin" 127–143.

40 Harris, "Het *Album Amicorum*" 119–120 n.10 on Ortelius's use of this motto in early letters. It is the epigraph to two Dutch letters to his cousin Emanuel van Meteren (1535–1612) that discuss coins. Hessels, *Epistulae* no. 7, 15, 25th October 1557 and no. 9, 20, 25th September 1559. See also Ortelius, *Album* 8v. For later mottos: Harris, "Humanist Friendship" 111–112.

41 Cornarius Janus, *De conviviorum veterum Graecorum, et hoc tempore Germanorum ritibus, moribus ac sermonibus et de Platonis ac Xenophontis dissensione, libellus* (Basel, I Oporinus: 1548). This is a short introductory treatise on ancient and modern banquets followed by Latin translations of Plato's and Xenophon's Symposia.

42 Rees V., "Ficino's Influence in Europe" in Shepherd M. (ed.), *Ficino. Friend to Mankind 1433–1499* (London: 1999) 64–75, 72. For sixteenth-century translations of Plato, including those by Ficino: Fistioc M.C., *The Beautiful Shape of the Good: Platonic and Pythagorean Themes in Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgement* (New York – London: 2002) 10.

43 On the evidence about Ficino's Academy in Florence Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Marsilio Ficino": <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ficino/> (accessed 29-09-16). Although there was apparently no formal institution, Ficino clearly entered into dialogue with associates in letters and conversations.

and educated daughter of Ortelius's close friend, the Calvinist Pieter Heyns (1537–1598).⁴⁴ Apparently composed at Ortelius's own request, this single, humble feminine voice bears comparison with the powerful role of the wise oracle Diotima in the *Symposium* who, in providing Socrates with a genealogy of Eros, says that he is the son of resourcefulness and need.⁴⁵

The book of mourning for Ortelius, published by Plantin Moretus in 1601, described his library as:

Well-stocked with all kinds of books so that his house might truly be called a shop of all manners of learning, to which people flocked from various places, as they did to Plato's Academy or Aristotle's Lyceum.⁴⁶

It is therefore reasonable to assume that Ortelius and his friends knew Plato's *Symposium* and Ficino's reworking of it as a Christian allegory, both of which discussed love in relation to the desire for the beautiful.⁴⁷ Both texts imagined human love in homosocial and homoerotic terms, particularly the desire of an authoritative, honourable man of virtue for a beautiful, younger, masculine beloved. If Plato's *Symposium* is read literally, physical possession of the beloved is, properly approached, the starting point on the 'ladder of love' that leads ultimately to love of the abstract beauty, which is divine.⁴⁸ Ficino's Christian commentary was much more anxious and inconsistent about touching the beloved, asserting more than once that it was appropriate to look with desire at youthful, masculine beauty, but not to engage with it sexually.⁴⁹ In Ortelius's album, John Dee's formulation 'Embrace with a Philosophical love' suggests an awareness, informed by Plato and Ficino, of the difference between an

44 Pieter Heyns translated Ortelius, *Theatrum* into Dutch. In 1588 he was a Calvinist member of the revolutionary municipality of Antwerp, placing his longstanding friend and collaborator Ortelius under suspicion of Protestantism. Harris, "Religious position" 89; Meeus H., "Abraham Ortelius et Peeter Heyns", in Karrow, *Cartograph et humaniste* 152–159.

45 Ortelius, *Album* 118v. 'Catarina Heyns, daughter of Mr. Pieter. In Antwerp the last of September 1579.' Allen, *Symposium* 203b, 146, 51.

46 Broecke, *Ortelius* 11, English translation from Sweertius Franciscus, *Lacrymae in obitum CL. V. Abrahami Ortelii Antverpiani* (Antwerp, Johannes Keerbergen: 1601). On the contents of Ortelius's huge library: Broecke M. van den, "Abraham Ortelius's Library Reconstructed", *Imago Mundi* 66, 1 (2014) 25–50; Broecke, *Ortelius* 253–260.

47 Crawford K., *European Sexualities 1400–1800. New Approaches to European History* (New York – Cambridge: 2007) 191–193.

48 Crawford K., "Marsilio Ficino, Neoplatonism, and the Problem of Sex", *Renaissance & Reformation/Renaissance et Reforme* 28, 2, 3 (2004), 3–35, 7.

49 Crawford "Ficino" passim.

intellectual/spiritual and a physical union.⁵⁰ Yet touch and indeed penetration were theoretically implicit in both Plato and Ficino because beauty was the outer manifestation of the 'inner' goodness or virtue, which was the ultimate object of desire.⁵¹

Plato's and Ficino's conceptions of love, and the differences and tensions in their expressed views on copulation between men, can inform our understanding of the expressions of passionate love in contributions to Ortelius's album. They may lead us to ask whether what Peter Burke has described as 'an emotional and religious rhetoric of friendship' was enacted sexually, but equally lead us to be cautious and historically sensitive in formulating answers.⁵² For example, the commemorative entry for the artist and archaeologist Philips van Winghe, Ortelius's friend, agent and correspondent in Italy, seems infused with the desire of an older man for a young and beautiful beloved [Fig. 19.3].⁵³ Van Winghe died in Florence in 1592, aged 32. On one page of the opening, he is portrayed in a print made 'in the sweetest friendship' as a handsome young man of twenty-nine.⁵⁴ In the drawing on the opposite page, a winged cupid-like genius with a halo presides over a hand-clasp between a beardless, veiled youth and an older man whose receding hairline and beard are reminiscent

50 Ortelius, *Album* 90r: 'Philosophico complectitur Amore'.

51 Compare Crawford, "Ficino" 3–4 and *passim*. Fistioc, *The Beautiful Shape of the Good* 61–95.

52 Burke, "Humanism and Friendship" 266. Compare Classen A., "J. The Homosocial vs the Homoerotic", in "Introduction: Friendship—The Quest for a Human Ideal and Value: From Antiquity to the Early Modern Time", in Classen A. – Sandige M. (eds.), *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age. Explorations of a Fundamental Ethical Discourse* (Berlin – New York: 2010) 48–49. For examples of texts written by Ortelius relating to sexuality and sexual morality Broecke, *Ortelius* 73–76.

53 On Van Winghe see note 22 above. For Van Winghe's (Dutch) letters to Ortelius, which mention 'medals' and record him making drawings for the latter and procuring maps, prints of antiquities and modern works and books see: Hessels, *Epistulae*, no. 170, 408–412; no. 185, 443–445; no. 217, 520–523. Van Winghe salutes Ortelius as 'Carissime Domine Ortelij'; 'S.P. Seigneur Ortelij' and 'Signor Ortelius'. He signs his letters 'Tuus Philippus'. The letters are addressed to 'mijnen goeden vrint', 'mon cher amij'. They are respectful, friendly and extremely informative, without the emotional tenor of, say, Arias Montanus's letters to Ortelius.

54 Ortelius, *Album* 52v. The oval engraving of Philips van Winghe by Gijsbert van Veen after his brother Otto van Veen, with a subscription added by Ortelius, is a good example of the intersubjective circulation and commemoration of love. The border is inscribed 'MEMORAEVITER DÑI PHILIPPI WINGI AMICI DVLCISS., OTHO VENIVS DD GISBERTVS VENIVS L.M.F. 1589'.

of Ortelius's own portrait iconography.⁵⁵ The conjoining touch, immediately beneath the child's genitals, is heated by flames, apparently of passion, on an altar dedicated 'Amori Aeterno' ('to eternal love'), a sentiment echoed by the gift to the young man of symbols of eternity, the sun and the crescent moon.

In his life of Hendrick Goltzius, published over a decade after Van Winghe's death, Karel van Mander remembered the latter as 'very well acquainted' with Abraham Ortelius.⁵⁶ The album drawing is headed 'In eternal memory, the friendship of Philips van Winghe and Abraham Ortelius, happily contracted in Antwerp'.⁵⁷ This seems to make an historical claim to the sort of formal, quasi-marital connection between masculine friends explored by Alan Bray.⁵⁸ However, the inscription does not include a date and it functions not only like a record of an inscription on an ancient stele but also as the title to an emblem (note the paper-like 'architrave' with decorative extensions). The iconography is immediately evocative of a marriage but the knowledgeable would also have associated it with antique funerary imagery of the departing soul.⁵⁹ Beneath Van Winghe's life-like portrait, an inscription in Ortelius's own hand makes

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- 55 See the two portrait engravings by Philips Galle, one after a drawing by Hendrick Goltzius: Sellink – Leesberg, *New Hollstein* nos. 659, 660, 147–150.
- 56 Mander Karel van, *Het Schilder-Boek* (Haarlem, Paschier van Wesbusch: 1604) 283v. (Life of Hendrick Goltzius): 'wesende grootlijcx kennis van den vermaerden Landt-beschrijver Abraham Ortelius t'Antwerpen.' This translation of 'grootlijcx kennis' is from Miedema H. (intro. and trans.), *Karel van Mander. The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters. Volume I: The Text* (Doomspijk: 1994), 393.
- 57 Ortelius, *Album* 53r. 'MEM. AEVITERNAE Amicitiae PHILIPPI VAN-WINGHI ET DN ABRAMI ORTELI FELICITER ANDDVERPAE CONTRACTAE'.
- 58 Bray A., *The Friend* (Chicago – London: 2003) 214 argues that 'kinship and friendship turned on the same axis' and that traditional contracts of sworn brotherhood overlapped with betrothal and marriage as ways of solemnising such kinship. However, *ibid.* 111 characterises sworn brotherhood as 'characteristically [...] a young man's business' (rather than the friendship between an older man and a young beloved described in Plato's *Symposium*). See further Bray, *The Friend* 96–97 and *passim*. The German text in the artist Melchior Lork's 1574 contribution to Ortelius's album implies that the entry is *itself* a token of a permanent commitment 'through which I endeavour with my whole heart, to be his friend for life'. The centrepiece of the image is a ring. Ortelius, *Album* 22r, translated Broecke, *Ortelius* 310.
- 59 The image is inspired by a Gallo-Roman funerary column of the Secundini in Igel and a (forged?) Roman Funerary altar dedicated to the Furfani family. Ortelius considered the two figures on the monuments to be spouses. Meganck, *Erudite Eyes* 57–62, 210–211, citing Abraham Ortelius and Johannes Vivianus, *Itinerarium* (Antwerp: Plantin 1584) 52–3. Marcocci G., "Is This Love? Same-sex Marriage in Renaissance Rome", *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 4, 2 (2015) 37–52 discusses a trial in Rome in 1578 about which Van Winghe would certainly have known.

it explicit that his friend is doubly out of reach: in Italy and physically dead.⁶⁰ On the opposite page, the two depicted figures, dressed in quasi-classical garb and in conjunction with a symbolic figure and motifs, are situated in an antique and quasi-allegorical realm. Their contract and contact are made visible at the level of their souls, abstracted (not divorced) from earthy, present-day reality through the work of art. The image is ambiguous, capable of being interpreted in terms of both a physical and spiritual connection, the tangible permanence of stone and the fragile construction of an imagined golden age in which all desires can be fulfilled.

Importantly, the Aristotelian belief that the power to procreate resided solely in the male sex meant that both Plato and Ficino could understand natural fertility (the bodily generation of offspring) and the spiritual, intellectual and cultural productions of the masculine soul as founded in love and engendering forms of immortality. According to the wise Diotima in the *Symposium*:

Some men are pregnant in respect to their bodies [...] and turn more to women and are lovers in that way, providing in all future time, as they suppose, immortality and happiness for themselves through getting children. Others are pregnant in respect to their soul—for there are those [...] who are still more fertile in their souls than in their bodies with what it pertains to the soul to conceive and bear. What then so pertains? Practical wisdom and the rest of virtue—of which, indeed, all the poets are procreators, and as many craftsmen as are said to be inventors.⁶¹

Philips van Winghe can be described as a procreative soul in precisely these terms. Characterised by his brother as ‘antiquitati addictissimum’, his production of writings about and drawings of Roman antiquities was prolific.⁶² Van Mander called him ‘a learned young Nobleman from Brussels [...] being a great Antiquarian who described and sketched everything [...]’.⁶³ It can be suggested, therefore, that the four symbols above the head of the younger man in Ortelius’s

60 Ortelius, *Album* 52v.

61 Allen, *Symposium* 208e–209a, 153, 76. Compare Ficino’s version, quoted in Crawford, “Ficino” 12.

62 Philips van Winghe’s brother Hieronumus, a Canon at Tournai, writing to Ortelius with news of the death of his brother Philips and the expectation that Ortelius would transfer his ‘love’ to him as his heir. Hessels, *Epistulae* no. 223, 536–537 (15th October 1592). *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek* 8, 915, 916.

63 Mander, *Schilder-Boek* 238v. (Life of Hendrick Goltzius): ‘een gheleert jongh Edelman van Bruyssel, geheeten *Philips van Winghen*: [...] wesende een groot *Antiquarius*, die alles beschreef en opteyckende, wesende grootlijcx kennis van den vermaerden Landt-

album entry—of clasped hands, a rabbit, fruits and flames—characterise him in terms of mutual union, fertility, fecundity and passion. Looking back to the *Symposium* and Ficino's commentary on it, the circular motifs of sun, moon, ring and serpent biting its tail associated with the older man can be broadly interpreted as abstract, elevated and implicitly authoritative symbols of eternity and unity. I shall return to them towards the end of this essay.

The belief that love between men could generate good(s) situated narrow questions of sexual continence within a much broader discussion of the proper relationship between the elevated, 'heavenly' form of Eros and desires for physical and material fulfilment that Plato described in terms of benefits and wealth. Pausanias's answer, in the first speech of the *Symposium* is that, just like drinking, singing or having a discussion, acts of love are neither noble nor base in themselves but become so depending on the way they are approached and performed, governed by decorum and law. Looked at in this way, lovemaking approaches rhetoric, in which linguistic acts are valued to the extent that they are appropriate to the speaker and the purpose. A distinction is asserted between a virtuous, noble elite and vulgar, base fornicators. The older lover and the younger beloved, both gendered masculine, ideally participate in a relationship of the mind and spirit as well as the body, a steadfast, lifelong friendship or communion which can even resist political despotism.⁶⁴

In the *Symposium*, the speech given by the physician Eriximachus radically extends the definition of love from an active/passive relation between elite men to a mutual, procreative attraction between all beings: divine, human and other animals, and plants. He states that the aim, universally, is the cultivation of an harmonious balance between desire for abstract values and embodied yearnings. Such a balance generates health in the body, and wealth in the sense of the abundance characteristic of healthy nature. The balance is delicate and the process of achieving it risky and artful, but there is no necessary opposition between virtuous love and the desire for and enjoyment of embodied entities of all kinds. Plato's *Symposium* was not the kind of academic gathering to which we have become accustomed.⁶⁵

beschrijver *Abraham Ortelius* t'Antwerpen, van welcken *Goltzio* op de reyse door desen *van Winghen* waren ghetoont etlijke brieven [...].'

64 Allen, *Symposium* 182a–182b, 122, 183d–184a, 124.

65 Jeanneret M., *A Feast of Words: Banquets and Table Talk in the Renaissance*, Whiteley J. – Hughes E. (trans.), (Chicago: 1991) 140–150.

3 'The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole is Called Love': Ortelius's *Album amicorum* and *Deorum dearumque capita*

The double-page contribution to Ortelius's album by the Bruges artist and numismatist Hubert Goltzius (1526–1583) demonstrates how virtue, honour and profit might all be subsumed within a loving fellowship or communion. Addressed to his 'friend of the first rank on account of a most sweet familiarity', the dedication emphasises the status of both Goltzius and Ortelius as students of antiquity.⁶⁶ On the opposite page there is an image in which a woman in antique dress holds a cornucopia from which tumble not natural goods but coins [Fig. 19.4]. Itself coin-shaped and framed by garlands of burgeoning fruit, the device alludes to interests shared by the two men in both numismatics and bounty.⁶⁷ Its Latin motto 'Hubertas Aurea Saeculi', translatable as 'Hubert/Abundance, Gold of the Age',⁶⁸ condenses the material and the intellectual, named individuality and inter-subjectivity, into a single utterance. The play on words, in conjunction with the image, creates a circular emblem in which the desirous reader can create a unified whole in which meaning and value are condensed and conjoined.

Goltzius's emblem is placed within an intricate grotesque and strapwork frame, like that surrounding John Dee's coat of arms. The album contains in total forty-nine similar drawings, skilfully executed in pen and blue-grey wash and very carefully laid down.⁶⁹ All these designs, attributed to Hans Vredeman

66 Ortelius, *Album* 36v: '[...] et amico primario, dulciss. consuetudinis ergo scribebat Brugis Flandrorum [...].'

67 Ortelius, *Album* 37r. Natural products, precious metals and ancient coins were all 'fruits of the earth'. For this characterisation of antiquities, see Fig. 19.7.

68 Ortelius, *Album* 37r. 'Hubertas Aurea Saeculi' is an inter-language play on the name *Ubertas* (Latin: richness, fullness) *Golt(zius)* (Dutch: goud). The design also served as the printer's device in Hubert Goltzius's beautiful and successful numismatic publications.

69 For the attribution of the drawings to Hans Vredeman de Vries (30 designs) and Gerard van Groeningen (25 designs) The Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Collection search (for Ortelius A., *Deorum Dearumque capita*)": <http://metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/626084> (accessed 9-10-16), with reference to further literature. Lentz L., "Abraham Ortelius and Medallist Art", *The Medal* 25, 3 (1994) 6–14 attributes the drawings without further reference to Hans Vredeman de Vries, Gerard van Groeningen and Marcus Gheeraerts. Broecke, *Ortelius* 339 attributes all the drawings to Vredeman de Vries, with reference to further literature. For the attribution of the prints to the Van Doetecum brothers, Van Groeningen and an unidentified artist, Lentz, "Medallist Art" 6. Some of the drawings are oriented the same way as the engraved/etched frames, some are not. For further literature: Heuer C., "Guidebooks to Chaos", in *The City Rehearsed. Object, Architecture and Print in the Worlds of Hans Vredeman de Vries* (London: 2009) 99–135, 130, n. 118.

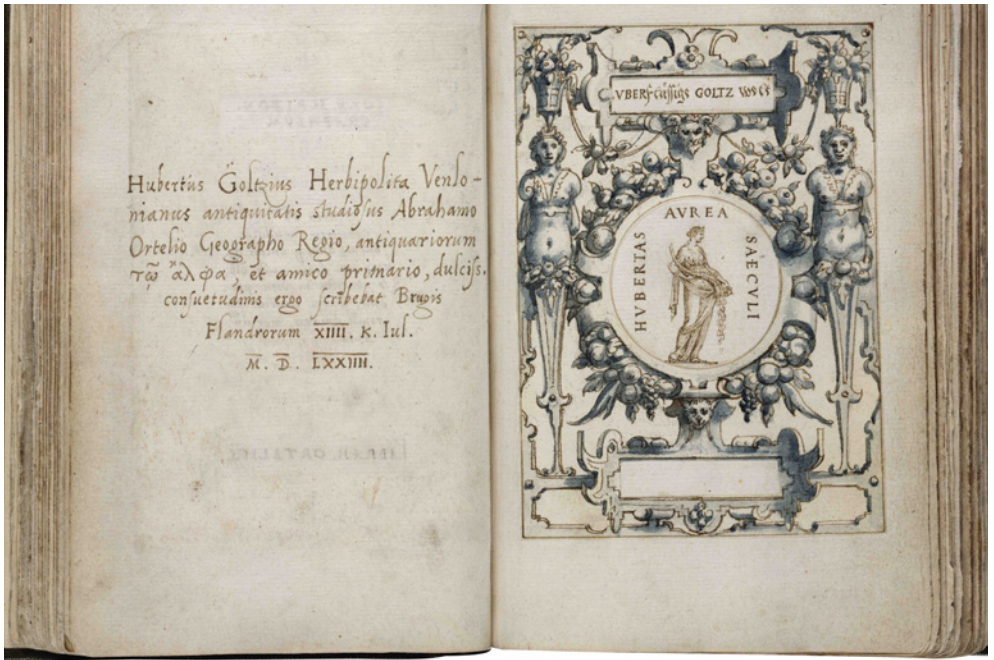


FIGURE 19.4 Entry for Hubert Goltzius (1526–1583), 1579, Abraham Ortelius, *Album Amicorum*, fol. 36v–37r (with laid-down drawing of the frame for 'Felicitas' in *Deorum Dearumque Capita*).

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de Vries (1547–ca. 1607) and Gerard van Groeningen (fl.1573), were etched and engraved for a publication of 1573 based on Ortelius's own rich collection of antique coins. This book's title, *Deorum dearumque capita ex vetustis numismatibus in gratiam antiquitatis studiosorum effigiata et edita*, indicates the close relationship between coins and medals, commercial currency and the currency of virtue.⁷⁰ It consists of fifty-nine plates with heads of antique deities, all but one of them based on the Roman republican coins in Ortelius's numismatic

70 Ortelius Abraham, *Deorum dearumque capita ex vetustis numismatibus in gratiam antiquitatis studiosorum effigiata et edita* (Antwerp, Philips Galle: 1573). On the close relationship between coins and medals: Stahl A.M., "Mint and Medal in the Renaissance" in Scher S.K. (ed.), *Perspectives on the Renaissance Portrait Medal* (New York – London: 2000) 137–143. On the mid-century controversy over whether ancient coins were originally intended as medals: Cunnally, *Images of the Illustrious* 136–137, with further literature.

collection.⁷¹ Unusually for contemporary numismatic publications, the divine heads are depicted in an apparently concave medallion within the elaborate frame. There is no surrounding text but the deity's name is written in a cartouche above and, in the cartouche below, the name of the moneyer and metal of the coin from which the deity's portrait has been taken [Fig. 19.5].⁷² In the *Album amicorum*, the cartouches and central discs which represent the 'gods' in *Deorum dearumque capita* have been replaced by texts and/or images offered by individual contributors such as John Dee and Hubert Goltzcius, or sometimes left blank [Figs. 19.2, 19.4, 19.8, 19.13].⁷³ Quite a number of these 'frame entries' are double-page spreads, with laudatory texts, dedications and occasionally a portrait of the contributor on the opposite page. Except for two coats of arms, the 'heads' of *Deorum dearumque capita* have been exchanged for emblem-like images and texts, reminiscent of the 'tail' of a coin.⁷⁴ For example, they are similar to the reverses of antique coins represented in an appendix to

71 The head of Canopus is stated to come from the 'Tabula Hieroglyphica' of Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), which was the source of many attempts to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphics. This unique reference in *Deorum dearumque capita* may therefore hint at esoteric significance. According to Broecke, *Ortelius* 289, Ortelius says in his entry on Canopus in *Deorum dearumque* that he saw the 'Tabula' in the library of Bishop Laevinus Torrentius, his friend and contributor to his album. I have not been able to find this in the 1573 edition but it is mentioned under 'Canopus' in the expanded edition by Franciscus Sweertius, for example Warburg Library (digital books), "Sweertius Franciscus, *Deorum dearumque capita* (Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus: 1612)": <http://warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/ckn630.pdf> (accessed 8-11-2016). Torrentius's library may actually have contained Vico Enea, *Vetustissima Tabula Aenea Hieroglyphica a Vico Parmensi edita e Musaeo Bembi* (Venice, (privilege): 1559). On the Tablet, see Curl J.S., *Egyptomania: the Egyptian revival: a recurring theme in the history of taste* (Manchester – New York: 1994) 58–59.

72 Some deities are depicted twice. For a fuller description of the book: Lentz, "Medallic Art" 6–7; Cunnally, *Images of the Illustrious* 205; Vine A., *In Defiance of Time. Antiquarian Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford: 2010) 31; Broecke, *Ortelius* 279–297, including an almost complete identification of the depicted coins by the numismatist Peter Berghaus.

73 Looked at under magnification, the cartouches and circular panels seem to have been carefully cut out and sometimes replaced by new paper discs. It is therefore unclear whether the drawings originally included representations of the heads of the gods and goddesses. Further technical examination of the book is needed to determine the construction of each folio.

74 Lentz, "Medallic Art" 9 also notes that 'Many of the entries and inscriptions borrow the format used on coins and medals'. See also Harris, "Het *Album Amicorum*" 121 n. 20, n. 21. For photographs of the reverses of the coins illustrated in *Deorum dearumque capita*: Broecke, *Ortelius* 282–297.



FIGURE 19.5 *'Felicitas', Deorum dearumque capita ex vetustis numismatibus in gratiam antiquitatis studiosorum effigiata et edita (Antwerp, Philips Galle: 1573) 21.* COPYRIGHT BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, MUNICH. [<http://bildsuche.digitale-sammlungen.de/index.html?c=viewer&bandnummer=bsb00070994&pimage=00021&lv=1&l=en>].

the successful emblem book published in 1564 by Ortelius's learned friend, the Hungarian János Zsámboky, alias Johannes Sambucus (1531–1584), which will be discussed in more detail shortly [Figs. 19.6, 19.7].⁷⁵

It was not unusual for printed books, especially Andrea Alciato's famous *Emblematum liber*, to form the foundation of albums of friends.⁷⁶ However, Ortelius's painstaking use of drawings relating to his own numismatic volume seems unique.⁷⁷ It was the presence of these 'frame drawings' that initially provoked me to think about the relationship between love and money in Ortelius's work. The publication of his *Deorum dearumque capita* in 1573⁷⁸ coincides with the initiation of the *Album amicorum* and, as an astute businessman, it made sense for Ortelius to re-use stylish drawings for which he had paid good money. For Jason Harris, although the use of sketches was extraordinary, it 'was in fact no more than the pragmatic recycling of material that was already to hand.'⁷⁹ Yet their condition and careful preservation indicates that they were not just patterns directly transferred onto the printing plate and raises the possibility that the connection between the numismatic publication and the *Album amicorum* was not accidental.

The 'frame drawings' are key to the album in that they appear from the dates added to them by contributors to have been available throughout the long creation of the work, and they were apparently the inspiration for four other folios with elaborate frames.⁸⁰ They are distributed throughout the album as it was indexed in 1598 by Ortelius's heir, his nephew and adoptive son Jacob Cools Ortelius (1563–1628). Moreover, the visual character of the whole book

75 Sambucus Johannes, *Emblemata* (Antwerp, Christophe Plantin: 1564). See also the illustrations to Vico Enea, *Augustarum imagines aereis formis expressae* (Venice, Manutius: 1558).

76 On interleaving: Alciato's *Book of Emblems*. The Memorial Web Edition in Latin and English "Barker W., "Alciato's Emblems and the Album Amicorum: A Brief Note on Examples in London, Moscow, and Oxford" (2002): <https://www.mun.ca/alciato/album.html> (accessed 09-10-16). Schlueter, *The Album Amicorum* 12; Wilson, "Social Networking" 208–209.

77 Harris, "Het *Album Amicorum*" 123.

78 It has been suggested that the *Deorum dearumque capita* was printed by Gillis Coppens van Diest, like the first edition of *Theatrum orbis terrarum*. See Bowen K., – Imhof D., *Christopher Plantin and Engraved Book Illustrations in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: 2008) 256.

79 Harris, "Het *Album Amicorum*" 123. Harris, "Humanist Friendship" 314 is more circumspect, acknowledging that 'it is highly unusual to find a friendship album constructed in this way.'

80 Also noticed in Harris, "Het *Album Amicorum*" 123. The different dates and places noted in the 'frame entries' produce a vivid impression of the extended temporality and physical mobility of the album.

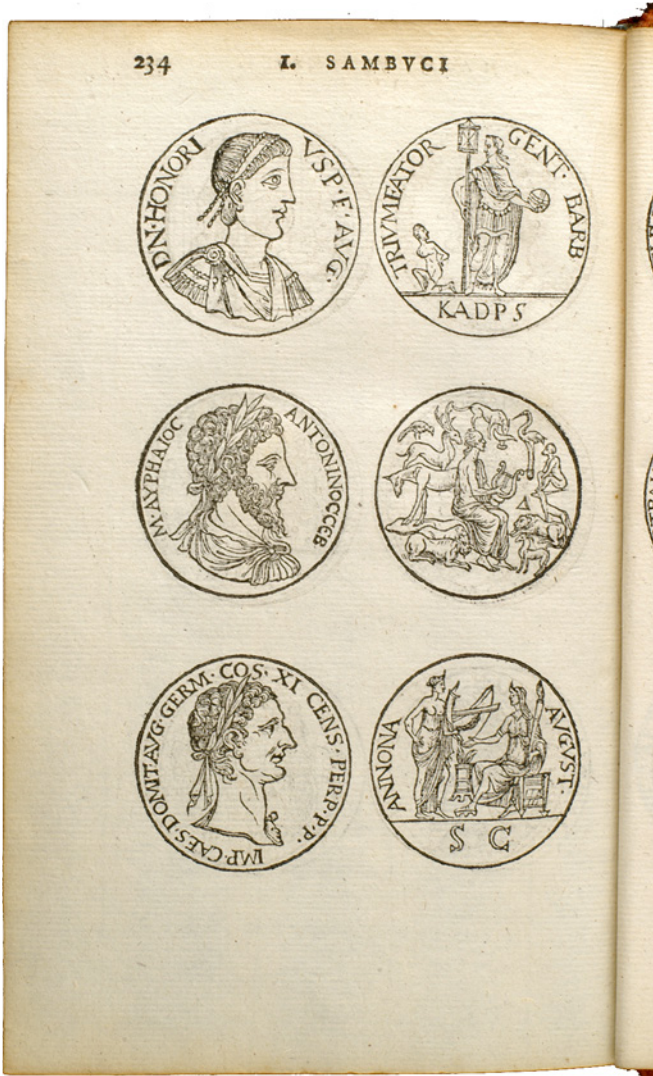


FIGURE 19.6 *Examples of antique coins illustrated in the appendix to Johannes Sambucus, Emblemata (Antwerp, Christophe Plantin: 1564) 234.*

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EMBLEMATA.

191

Antiquitatis studium.
Ad G. Schirletum.

Anti-



OMNIA consumit tempus, longamque senectam
Quid videt artifices quod peperere manus?
Imperio fatum eripuit monumenta, vetustus
Ne quid duraret, conficeretque situs.
Hunc Deus in frugem veterum virtute probatam
Vt vocet en monstrat marmora, Roma, tibi.
Effodiuntur opes irritamenta bonorum,
Nec poterit nummos vlla abolere dies.
Aerea testantur fuerint quibus aurea secla,
Multorumque monent quae tacere libri.

Ceden-

FIGURE 19.7 'Antiquitatis studium', Johannes Sambucus, Emblemata (Antwerp, Christophe Plantin: 1564) 191. COPYRIGHT UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW LIBRARY, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS. <http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/french/facsimile.php?id=sm947-m8r>



FIGURE 19.8 Entries for Laevinus Torrentius (1525–1595), n.d., and for Justus Liber, Baron of Kraigg, 1594, Abraham Ortelius, *Album Amicorum*, fol. 11v–12r (with laid down drawing of the frame for 'Romae' in *Deorum Dearumque Capita*).
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conforms to De Vries's and Van Groeningen's designs: the penmanship is generally fluent, agile and precise and the palette is overwhelmingly brown-black ink and blue-grey wash—with occasional moments of red.

The central element of the drawings, the circle or disk, is omnipresent in the album.⁸¹ In addition to the circular emblems donated by Zacharias Heyns and Nicholas Rockox mentioned earlier, there are ink and blue-grey wash entries in tondo format contributed by the Catholic cleric Laevinus Torrentius (1525–1595) and the librarian Arnold Mylius (1540–1604).⁸² Torrentius's entry depicts Alexander the Great engaging with the philosopher Diogenes, who is himself emerging from the barrel in which he reputedly made his home [Fig. 19.8].

81 Obvious spherical or oval motifs (including two portrait faces) appear on more than half of the folios (approximately 75).

82 Ortelius, *Album* 11v. and 61v. Both drawings are squared for transfer.



FIGURE 19.9 Entry for Melchior Lorck (1527–1583), 1574, Abraham Ortelius, *Album Amicorum*, 1574, fol. 22r.

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The presence of one of the *Deorum dearumque capita* drawings on the opposite page to Torrentius's image emphasises the similarity between the perfectly spherical, coin or medal-like border of the barrel and the numismatic space in the centre of the frame drawing. The artist Melchior Lorck (1527–1583) also contributed a tondo, in which a ring is balanced on the top of a rock buffeted by wind and waves [Fig. 19.9].⁸³ The Antwerp poet Michael van der Hagen (d. 1617) encircled his coat of arms with a hedge ('haag') and the Dutch inscription 'Van der Hagen does not separate.'⁸⁴ Daniel Engelhard (1569–1635), a reformed teacher and preacher, and the humanist, merchant and map-supplier Jan Radermacher (1538–1617) both contributed entries featuring terrestrial globes.⁸⁵ In the commemorative entry for Philips van Winghe, which was

83 Ortelius, *Album* 22r.

84 Ortelius, *Album* 21r: 'Van der Hagen scheydt niet'. The interlaced hedge bears comparison with the grotesque frames.

85 Ortelius, *Album* 54r: 'Feras non culpes'; 94r: 'Bonus in bonum'.

discussed earlier, the symbols associated with the older man who resembles Ortelius were also all broadly circular in shape [Fig. 19.3].

The distinctive visual qualities and iconography of the manuscript become more apparent when it is compared with the 'album amicorum' of Janus Dousa, Ortelius's 'old friend' and the contributor of one of the longest entries to his own album.⁸⁶ Initiated a few years earlier than that of Ortelius, Dousa's compendium was probably one of the starting points for the former's project.⁸⁷ However, although the small, portable format and general conception of the two works are similar, both containing textual contributions in different languages and calligraphic hands, the overall effect is very different because the visual offerings in Dousa's album consist entirely of brightly coloured coats of arms, whereas there are only seven coats of arms in Ortelius's manuscript [Fig. 19.10]. This visual contrast registers a significant difference in status between the two men: as Lord of Noordwyck, Dousa was a member of the minor aristocracy, whilst Ortelius belonged to the merchant elite.

It therefore seems that, although created by numerous different contributors over a long period, the dominant motifs and overall visual effect of the *Album amicorum* were controlled by its owner, Ortelius. This evidence of deliberation strengthens the possibility that there was more than pragmatism at stake in the re-use of the beautiful drawings for *Deorum dearumque capita*. Ortelius's formal dedication of the 1573 publication to the emblemist and numismatist Joannes Sambucus also hints that the connection of numismatics with his album of friends was not arbitrary. Sambucus's own *Emblemata*, first published in 1564, was closely related to 'alba amicorum' in that it not only contained numerous dedications to the author's own network of friends and contacts but was also one of the books regularly used as the basis of other people's albums.⁸⁸ Moreover, it included an appendix containing a selection of ancient gold and silver coins from Sambucus's personal collection, just like Ortelius's own publication.⁸⁹

86 Leiden University Library, BPL 1406.

87 Harris, "Het *Album Amicorum*" 118.

88 Sambucus *Emblemata*. Ortelius came into contact with Sambucus ca. 1565. Harris, "Het *Album Amicorum*" 121–122, n. 23. Sambucus used his printed emblems to make dedications in a comparable way to 'Alba amicorum': Visser A.S.Q., *Joannes Sambucus and the Learned Image. The use of the Emblem in late Renaissance Humanism* (Leiden – Boston: 2005) 111–132; Almási G., *The uses of humanism: Johannes Sambucus (1531–1584), Andreas Dudith (1533–1589), and the republic of letters in East Central Europe* (Leiden – Boston: 2009) 156–157. For printed books as the basis of *Alba amicorum*: Klose W., *Corpus Alborum Amicorum—CAAC—Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der Stammbücher des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: 1988) 359–64.

89 Visser, *Learned Image* 44–46.



FIGURE 19.10 Janus Dousa, *Album Amicorum*, fol. 20v-21r.

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In Sambucus's *Emblemata*, unlike *Deorum dearumque capita*, the coins were represented in *both* obverse and reverse, bringing into conjunction two different kinds of value [Fig. 19.6]. Sixteenth-century humanists derived much desired historical information from the portraits and inscriptions on the obverses of antique coins, and they identified personally with the virtue that they attributed to these authoritative models. Men such as Abraham Ortelius and his friends also, increasingly, expended immense erudition and discussion trying to work out the allegorical, mythological and moral meanings that were considered to reside in the figures, designs and texts on the reverses, in a similar way to (and sometimes as the inspiration for) emblems.⁹⁰ The double-sidedness of coins meant that these different kinds of knowledge were both

90 Waldman L.A., "The Modern Lysippus: A Roman Quattrocento Medalist in Context" in Scher, *Renaissance Portrait Medal* 97; Cunnally, *Images of the Illustrious* 36-37, 105-122; Visser, *Learned Image* 44-45. The intense interest of Ortelius and his friends in numismatics is evident in his surviving correspondence: Broecke, *Ortelius* 298-302.

distinguished from and connected to one another.⁹¹ Moreover, antique coins were produced from precious metals, which were attributed not only inherent worth and exchange value but also symbolic meaning. Most of those within humanist circles are likely to have been aware, for example, that Plato's *Republic* was organised hierarchically into men with souls of gold, silver, bronze and base metals.⁹²

The particular material and symbolic characteristics attributed to antique coins, which allied them to both money and medals, thus presented to humanists yearning to preserve a connection between heaven and earth the possibility of bringing recognisably different facets of value together. The collecting and exchange of coins and numismatic publications was a hugely popular activity amongst this community, probably in part for this reason.⁹³ Gifts of antique coins travelled constantly between one man and another, embodying knowledge, virtue, esteem and mutual friendship, which, as we have discussed in relation to Philips van Winghe, could extend to passionate expressions of love. In Ortelius's *Album amicorum*, the central role of coin exchange is made explicit in the long entry for the Leiden goldsmith and antiquarian Cornelis Claesz. van Aecken (ca. 1514–ca. 1590).⁹⁴ In the unusually large, hand-coloured portrait print, the sitter is depicted holding two coins evocative of ancient Rome: a gold coin in one hand, silver in the other [Fig. 19.11]. They are carefully tilted and inscribed to ensure recognition by fellow antiquarians as laureate busts of Julius Caesar (100–44 BCE) and of Divine Augustus, the first Roman

91 On double-sidedness: Cranston J., *The Poetics of Portraiture in the Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge: 2000) 27–61.

92 'While all of you in the city are brothers, we will say in our tale, yet God in fashioning those of you who are fitted to hold rule mingled gold in their generation, for which reason they are the most precious—but in the helpers silver, and iron and brass in the farmers and other craftsmen. And as you are all akin, though for the most part you will breed after your kinds.' Perseus Digital Library, "Adams J., *The Republic of Plato*": <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0168%3Abook%3D3%3Asection%3D415a> (accessed 09-11-16).

93 For the lively exchange of *Deorum dearumque capita* in the 1570s: Lentz, "Medallic Art" 7–8. More generally: Cunnally, *Image of the Illustrious* and Stahl A.M., "Numismatics in the Renaissance" in Stahl A.M. – Oberfranc G. (eds.), *The rebirth of antiquity: numismatics, archaeology and classical studies in the culture of the Renaissance* (Princeton: 2008) 3–26.

94 Ortelius, *Album* 97v–99r. Translated into French in Puraye, *Album* 74–76, and into English in Broecke, *Ortelius* 327–328.



FIGURE 19.11 Entry for Cornelius Claesz. Van Aecken (ca. 1514–ca. 1590), n.d., Abraham Ortelius, *Album Amicorum*, fol. 97v–98r.
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COLLECTION (MS. LC 2.113).

emperor who was deified after his death in AD 14.⁹⁵ The print is accompanied in the album by two substantial laudatory poems in Latin and Dutch. Van Aecken's entry then concludes with a Latin text in Roman hand:

I Cornelius Aquanus, a most studious cultivator of the antiquities of Rome in Batavia, have sent from Leiden to Antwerp, to Abraham Ortelius, principal Geographer to the King, Friend and most excellent host, this

95 The Emperor Augustus was born in 63 BCE. The print, datable to 1578, is by Johannes Wierix (1549–ca. 1620), who worked on Ortelius's *Parergon* and in Delft between 1577 and 1579. Ruyven-Zeman Z.–Leesberg, M. (comps.) – Stock, J. van der – Leesberg, M. (eds.), *The New Hollstein: Dutch and Flemish etchings, engravings and woodcuts 1450–1700. The Wierix Family Part IX* (Rotterdam: 2004) no. 2037, 178–180. The inscriptions on the coins are legible as 'JVLIVS CAESAR PISIA(?)' and 'DIV [...] AVGV[.]TVS PATER'. My thanks to Richard Abdy, curator of Roman Coins at the British Museum, for his invaluable help in describing these motifs.

bilingual choice of verses, and my own self and an exchange of tokens of hospitality ['hospitalis tesserae'], which would never be wrested away by the storms of any offense, having mutually decided to help one another with the support of the Gods. The year of salutation 1580 5th ['nones'] of January.⁹⁶

The numismatic passion, which was enacted through handling, close inspection, verbal and gift exchange, bears comparison with Aristophanes's definition of love in Plato's *Symposium* that forms the epigraph to this article: 'the desire and pursuit of the whole'. Indeed the numismatic form,—circular and double-sided—is implicit in Aristophanes's entertaining account of both the origin and the resolution of human desire, since desire resulted from the separation of a subject from its other half. Primeval humanity included males, females and the androgynous, and it was round in shape, with two faces (male-male, female-female and male-female) looking opposite ways:

The reason there were three sexes of this sort was that the male was originally the offspring of the Sun, the female of the Earth, and what has a share of both the Moon, because the Moon also has a share of both. They were spherical both in themselves and in their gait [...]. They were terrible in strength and force, and they had high thoughts and conspired against the gods [...].⁹⁷

Offended by this insolence, the gods humbled human beings by splitting one half from the other, increasing their number and yet diminishing their power in a way that is comparable to the inflation and devaluation of coinage—financial manipulations that were all too familiar in sixteenth-century Antwerp.⁹⁸ As I have discussed elsewhere, the themes of hubris and splitting are reminiscent of another potent myth in Ortelius's Antwerp, the story of Babel, in which

96 Ortelius, *Album* 99r: 'Cornelius Aquanus, studiosissimus Antiquitatis Romanae in Batavis cultor, DN Abrahamo Ortelio, Archigeographo Regio, Amico et hospiti-iucundiss. hanc bilinguem inconditorum uersu-um Farragmem Lugduno Antwerpiam L.M. transmittēbam, et meam, & hospitalis tesserae vicem, quae ne ullis porro offensio. procellis convellatur, operas (uti spero) mutuas tradituri uterque pro se sedulo Dis iuvantibus adnitemur. A Æbertae salutis. CIO. IO LXXX Nonis Januar.' My thanks to Dr. An Castangia for her invaluable support with Latin translation.

97 Allen, *Symposium* 190b–190e, 131.

98 Woodall J., "'De Wisselaer'. Quentin Matsys's Man Weighing Gold Coins and his Wife 1514" in Goettler C. – Ramakers B. – Woodall J. (eds.), *Trading Values in Early Modern Antwerp. Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 64 (2014) (Leiden – Boston: 2014) 38–75, 49–51 with further literature.

the divine punishment was a linguistic rather than a physical separation and scattering of the human communion.⁹⁹ However, in contrast to the inalienable difference within the sign which Jehovah implemented as justice for Babel,¹⁰⁰ in the *Symposium* Zeus ultimately showed mercy by enabling the two halves to reunite so that,

if male met female they might in their embrace beget and their race continue to exist, while at the same time if male met male, there would at least be satiety from their intercourse and they would be relieved and go back to work and look after the other concerns of life.¹⁰¹

Within the humanist economy, the possibility of this union in prelapsarian bliss was projected not only onto language but onto gold and silver coins in antiquity, which Ortelius and Van Winghe described as ‘medalien’.¹⁰² Sambucus’s emblem “Antiquitatis Studium” (“The Study of Antiquity”) creates an ideal place in which the ravages of time are overcome, and the material value of coins is completely exchanged for the currency of virtue [Fig. 19.7]:

[...] The riches are excavated as an incentive for good deeds and no day can ever efface coins. The gold coins testify to those who lived in a golden age and they point out many things about which books have been silent.¹⁰³

The ancient gold or silver coin was thus both a valuable medium of gift exchange and a double-sided token of immense, concentrated historical knowledge and symbolic value. It was also a kind of microcosm of a virtuous universe, identified with antiquity, for which its humanist owner longed. In Van Aecken’s portrait in Ortelius’s album, the sitter is shown in contemporary dress and the inscription locates him in Leiden, but his gaze is abstracted and behind him workers labour to create—or recover—the eternal monuments of antiquity [Fig. 19.11]. Hubert Goltzius’s entry, which was discussed earlier, suggests that

99 *The Bible* (King James Version, 1611), Genesis 11:16. Woodall, “Lost in Translation” passim.

100 Derrida J., “Des Tours de Babel”, in Graham J. (ed.), *Difference in Translation* (Ithaca – London: 1985) 165–207, 165–167.

101 Allen, *Symposium* 191b–191c, 132.

102 Hessels, *Epistulae* no. 7, 15; no. 9, 20 and see above n. 53.

103 For example Sambucus, *Emblemata* 19: ‘[...] Effodiuntur opes irritamenta bonorum/ Nec poterit nummos ulla abolere dies/ Aerea testantur fuerint quibus aurea secla/ Multorumque monent quae tacuere libri.’ http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/french/facsimile.php?id=sm947_m8r (accessed 30-09-16). Quoted and translated in Visser, *Learned Image* 45–46.

the insertions into the numismatic spaces at the heart of the framed entries in the *Album amicorum* could be understood implicitly to link Ortelius and his friends—as individuals and as a community—with antiquity as a golden age, a utopia in which peace and harmony prevailed over difference and change, and all needs were abundantly fulfilled [Fig. 19.4].

4 'Numismatic Semiotics': Double-Sidedness and Exchange

We have seen that the emblematic insertions into the frame drawings in Ortelius's album were reminiscent of contemporary depictions of the reverses of antique coins. Yet the book as a whole also invoked the *obverses* of coins, introducing the possibility that the album was engaged with by contemporaries as a compilation of double-sided folios. It has been mentioned that many of the entries comprise a full opening rather than a single folio and, as well as the emblem-like 'reverses', the volume contains a considerable number of bust-length portraits—the central motif of coin 'heads'. These include a circular print of the Liège artist Lambert Lombard (1505–1566), which would have been immediately recognisable as broadly numismatic [Fig. 19.15].¹⁰⁴ Since Lombard died some years before the *Album amicorum* was begun, this image and the fragmentary autograph texts that accompany it were probably inserted by Ortelius himself, perhaps as another key motif. While there are no other tondo portraits in the album, there are oval portrait prints in bust-length format with identifying Latin texts around their borders. When these individual 'heads' are brought into relation with the emblematic 'tails' in the circular openings of the frame drawings and other circular motifs on other pages of the book, exchanges are instigated which seem to fulfil the desire for a whole which acknowledged and yet unified difference.¹⁰⁵ What might be called a 'numismatic semiotics' emerges. The juxtapositions within the pages of the book thus had the potential to set into motion rich imaginary—and actual—conversations and other exchanges in which portraiture was linked with emblematics and allegory, the

104 Ortelius, *Album* 51r. Attributed to Lambert Suavius (1510–1576), the portrait print is dated 1560 and inscribed around the frame LAMBERTVS LOMBARDVS PICTOR EBVRONENSIS ANNO AET XLV. Hoop Scheffer D. de – Keyes G.S. (comps.) – Boon K.G. (ed.), *Hollstein's Dutch and Flemish etchings, engravings and woodcuts c. 1450–1700* 27 (Blaricum: 1984) no. 76, 186. The handwritten fragments state: *Uw willigste Lambert/Lombard*.

105 For the intertextual construction of knowledge in this period, compare Ashworth W.B., "Emblematic Natural History of the Renaissance" in Jardine N. – Secord J.A. – Spary E.C. (eds.), *Cultures of Natural History* (Cambridge: 1996) 17–37.

present was connected to the ancient past, the currency of money was inseparable from that of virtue. The shared values that constituted the community of friends were coupled with various named individuals of distinct status and power, especially Ortelius himself.

The contribution to the *Album amicorum* of Cornelis van Aecken alias Aquanus demonstrates the centrality of exchange and translation between the contemporary Netherlands and 'Rome' as the idealised location of an antique golden age [Figs. 19.11, 19.12]. It also makes explicit the material and conceptual importance of coins within this process. As mentioned, Van Aecken was a goldsmith. In fact, from 1558–1575 he had been dean and assayer of the Leiden guild of goldsmiths, a metier which involved the valuation and exchange of gold coins and from which he derived considerable wealth.¹⁰⁶ At the same time, a publication of 1588 by the antiquarian Hadrianus Junius (1511–1575) noted that Van Aecken pursued his trade 'honoris causa' and described him at some length as a serious student of antiquities.¹⁰⁷ From the mid-1560s van Aecken was the proprietor of a Leiden inn called *De Wissel* ('The Exchange'), in which he presumably valued and changed money, but which also contained a rich collection of Roman antiquities. Indeed, according to the Latin poem that has been trimmed from beneath the portrait print inserted into the album, visitors had no need to travel because they would find Rome in his house.¹⁰⁸

This desire for mutual, ongoing exchange between, on one hand, individual, embodied experience in contemporary Holland, and on the other a timeless immortality identifiable with (antique) Rome, is evident in Van Aecken's portrait print. Against the backdrop of 'the eternal city', Van Aecken's depiction handling coins behind a table or 'bank' is reminiscent of contemporary Netherlandish images of moneychangers, although perceived from a different angle. The possibility of exchange between the earthly Netherlands and a

106 On Van Acken's wealth: Rooyen H. van, "Het Mirakel van Leiden", *Jaarboekje voor geschiedenis en oudheden van Leiden en Rijnland* 35 (1943) 108–130, 121.

107 Junius Hadrianus, *Batavia* (Antwerp, Plantijn Press: 1588) 117–122, with a reference to Ortelius 117. See also Schrijver Peter, *Batavia Illustrata* (Leiden, Ludovicum Elzevirium: 1609), 217.

108 *De Wissel* was in the Breestraat, where the fraternity 'Amicitia' was established in 1768. Beelaerts van Blockland W.A., "Een in een vergeetboek geraakt 16de eeuwse minnaar van oudheden te Leiden: Cornelis van Aecken", *Jaarboekje voor geschiedenis en oudheden van Leiden en Rijnland* 25 (1932–33) 91–101; Rooyen, "Het Mirakel" 119; Pelinck F., "Cornelis van Aecken en de gedenkstenen in de St. Jeroensbrug", *Jaarboekje voor geschiedenis en oudheden van Leiden en Rijnland* 35 (1943) 180–185. See also Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorisch Documentatie (RKD), <https://rkd.nl/en/artists/358627> (accessed 14-10-16) with further literature.

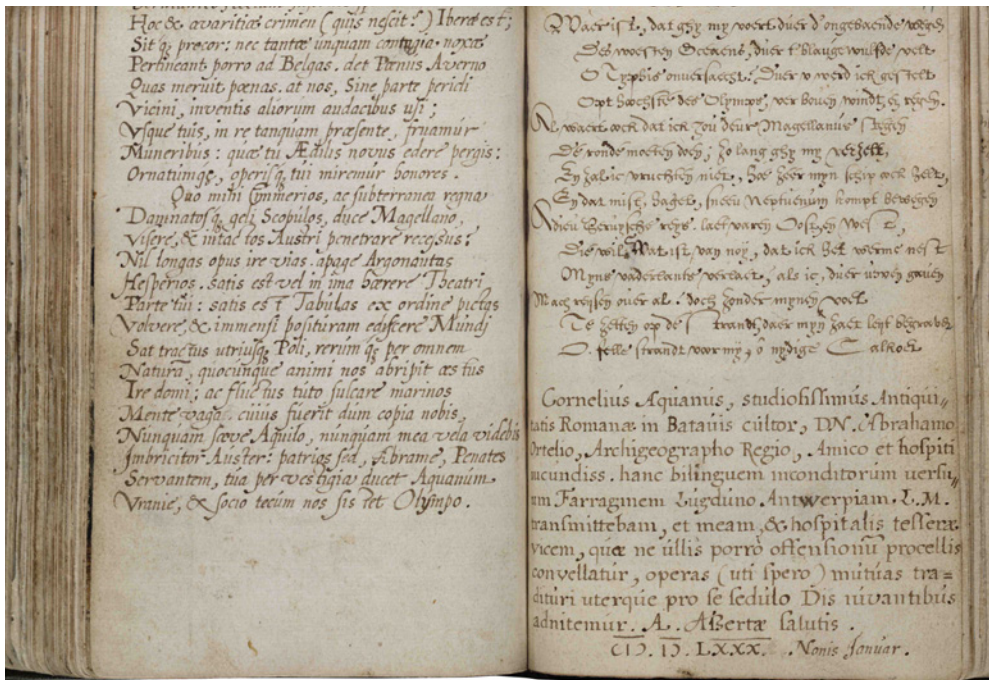


FIGURE 19.12 Second page of entry for Cornelius Claesz. Van Aecken, Abraham Ortelius, *Album Amicorum*, fol. 98v–99r.

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heaven located 'elsewhere' is also addressed in the two poems that Van Aecken contributed to the album. One is a learned Latin epic written in Italic script and the other a Dutch sonnet, a modern poetic form explicitly associated with love [Fig. 19.12]. The modern, self-consciously refined hand of the sonnet is associated with the vernacular.¹⁰⁹ Yet both these texts engage with the possibility of being able to travel in time and space whilst remaining in the Netherlands,

109 My thanks to Anne Goldgar, Kasper van Ommen and Arnold Hunt for their help in identifying the calligraphy and locating it geographically. According to Arnold Hunt, the hand is 'geschreven letter'. It resembles a typeface first used in 1557 that became known as *Civilité*. This vernacular typeface was based on contemporary French handwriting; its inventor, Robert Granjon, called it 'lettres françaises'. The contemporary Flemish hand was similar, and a variant of the typeface was soon popular in the Netherlands. Johnson A.F., *Type Designs* (London: 1966) 138–140.

of being simultaneously abroad (even on Olympus) and at home.¹¹⁰ Composed by a Protestant for a liberal Catholic in the middle of a war which was splitting the Netherlands in two, the concluding Latin text of Van Aecken's contribution, quoted earlier, makes the poems, portrait and 'tokens of hospitality' traverse the distance from Leyden to Antwerp in payment to Ortelius for his own generosity and as substitutes for embodied presence. If the user of the book enacts an inter-medial 'exchange' between this summary text and the portrait print on the facing page, an equivalence can be discerned between the 'hospitalis tesserae' of the text and the antique coins in the image: two laureate heads of Roman Emperors which could in turn be associated with Van Aecken and Ortelius themselves.¹¹¹ In the currency of virtue and specifically love, these immensely resonant 'things' are means of transcending distance and difference and accomplishing life-enhancing, even life-preserving, exchanges between bodies, minds and souls. This was not 'mere' rhetoric but the symbolic enactment of an intense need to make contact between and unify entities that were increasingly recognisable as different. At 'De Wissel', as in Plato's Symposium, this process was fuelled by conviviality and good wine.

Van Aecken's concluding Latin text calls on the support of the Gods in mutually helping one another. Did some of those who handled, perused and donated to Ortelius's *Album amicorum* call upon the divinities represented in *Deorum dearumque capita* to 'support' the community of friends constituted in and by the manuscript? Some people would have known both works because they were available within the same humanist networks. For example, the title plate of the copy of *Deorum dearumque capita* now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, is inscribed by Ortelius with a dedication to the cartographer Gerard Mercator (1512–1594), who in 1575 contributed his own portrait and a warm reciprocal dedication to the *Album amicorum*.¹¹² Moreover, seven of the insets in the frame drawings in the album were contributed in 1574 by men in the Bruges circle of Hubert Goltzius and his mycaenas, the ardent numismatist Marcus Laurijn, Lord of Watervliet (1525–1581). When such enthusiasts inserted their emblem- and coin-like 'reverses' into the circular apertures in Vredeman de Vries's and Van Groeningen's re-contextualised drawings, they

110 The Latin epic ends: 'Patrios sed, Abrame, Penates Servantem / tua per vestigia ducet Aquanum / Vranie [sic], & socio tecum nos sistet Olympo.' For my translation, see below 697. Compare the translation in Broecke *Ortelius* 328.

111 See above, note 95.

112 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/626331> (accessed 09-11-16); Ortelius, *Album* 115v.

would certainly have been familiar with the 'obverses' of ancient divinities in the *Deorum dearumque capita*.

I have found some traces of desire to bring the two facets together: to link the mortal men included in the *Album amicorum* with the divinities of *Deorum dearumque capita*.¹¹³ It is surely not coincidental, for example, that Hubert Goltzius's punning emblem with the cornucopia of coins is inserted into the frame drawing for 'Felicitas', which is the only gold coin illustrated in *Deorum dearumque capita* [compare Figs. 19.4 and 19.5]. Similarly, in the Latin verse opposite to his dedication to Ortelius in the frame drawing for 'Moneta', the learned music theorist and poet Andreas de Pape (1547–1581) seems aware that Moneta was both an epithet of Juno as the protector of coins, and the name of the mother of the Muses. He says that commerce has not nourished him; rather he has been moved by the assault of the Muses.¹¹⁴ It also seems likely that Jacob Cools Ortelius knew what he was doing when he added an inscription emphasising his reverence for his uncle to the drawing for the frame of the Roman god 'Honos' ('Honour'). His inset was an emblem of a fortified castle, inscribed in Hebrew 'God' and in Latin 'Refuge of the Just'.¹¹⁵ Jason Harris notes the personal resonance in troubled times of the lawyer and politician Gillis Wyts (d. after 1578) placing an image of a flying dove with an olive branch encircled by the motto 'Intact, it flies across populous towns' into the frame design for 'Libertas', the Roman goddess and personification of liberty.¹¹⁶

It seems significant, therefore, that the first lines of Daniel Rogers' (1538?–1591) ode to the contributors near the beginning of the *Album amicorum* speak of beloved companions who are 'a friend to the Gods', and of protecting Faith by a consecrated bond.¹¹⁷ In general terms, such 'friendship' between the individual entries in the *Album amicorum* and the depictions of ancient gods in the *Deorum dearumque capita* fits into the widespread practice of connecting models and exemplars of abstract ideas and qualities, often in the form of

113 See also Meganck *Erudite Eyes* 207. Further research may well reveal more links.

114 Ortelius, *Album* 55v.–56r. Compare Broecke, *Ortelius* 317.

115 Ortelius, *Album* 79r: 'Toti quam descripsit orbi clarissimo, mihiq. orbis totius charissimo, dño, abrahamo ortelio, avunculo multis mihi nominibus colendo, exarabam iacob. colius ortelianus'.

116 Ortelius, *Album* 27r: 'Volitet crebras intacta per urbes'. Harris, "Humanist Friendship" 305.

117 Ortelius, *Album* 2v: 'Cuj primus albo, nomina dulcium / Signanda duxit grata sodalium, / Is Dijs amicus, sanctiori / lege Fidem statuit colendam: [...]'. The rest of the Ode suggests that the friendships recorded in the album may have been formally contracted to render them eternal in troubled times. For an English translation of the entire text Broecke, *Ortelius* 304.

personifications, with actual individuals. The deities selected for depiction in *Deorum dearumque capita* were appropriate exemplars, although they were no doubt also chosen because they demonstrated the range of Ortelius's numismatic collection. They were not only the standard Olympian gods—in their Roman manifestations—but a much wider and more varied group.¹¹⁸ Many of them were astrological and a number personified virtues or other positive qualities such as peace, piety, virtue and liberty, for which good Christians and humanists yearn and strive. Yet the material transposition of the frame drawings from *Deorum dearumque capita* to the *Album amicorum*, and the careful way in which the central disks are cut out and inset with self-representations by individual contributors, meant that something more was happening than just 'symbolic' emulation of exemplars. The self-representations of individuals were being *physically exchanged* with and *inserted into* the place of the divine heads drawn from the obverses of the coins.¹¹⁹

It is possible that Ortelius and some of his friends conceived of the interplay between the *Album amicorum* and the *Deorum Dearumque* specifically in terms of the Platonic 'ladder of love' whereby human beings attained union with the divine beauty that for Christians is God.¹²⁰ This provides some explanation for the unusual way in which the numismatic deities are depicted in *Deorum*

118 The names of almost all of them have been Latinised. Compare Lentz, "Medallic Art" 7, which refers to Franciscus Sweertius's expanded 1612 edition of *Deorum dearumque capita*, for example Warburg Library (digital books), "Sweertius Franciscus, *Deorum dearumque capita* (Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus: 1612)": <http://warburg.sas.ac.uk/pdf/ckn630.pdf> (accessed 8-11-2016). Lentz says that 'Liber I' contains 'First and Highest Gods and Goddesses', while 'Liber II' contains 'Heroes' and 'Virtues'. Referring to the preface, Lentz also remarks that there was 'a broad range of household and rural deities, including those especially venerated in the city of Rome and those associated with sacred trees.'

119 For the importance of the inset: Stoichita V., *The Self-Aware Image. An Insight into Early Modern Meta-Painting* (Cambridge: 1996) 67–76.

120 The 'Compagnia degli Amici' of Pietro Bembo is an important, overlooked precedent for Ortelius's *Album amicorum* that suggests a common indebtedness to Ficino and Plato's *Symposium*. Bembo established the 'Compagnia' whilst he was writing his own dialogue on love, *Gli Asolani* (first published 1505), with the aim of realising the utopian world of *Gli Asolani* amongst embodied individuals. Bembo's rules for his 'Amici' (who comprised cultivated intellectuals of both genders) describe two 'insignia' to be commissioned by each person. The first was a gold medal, intended to be worn on the arm, with an image of the three Graces on one side and the inscription 'amicorum sodalitati' on the other. The second was a small, good quality portrait, to be inscribed with the name of the sitter on one side and completed by a personal emblem on the other. 'And all these small panels should be kept as a book, carefully preserved as a memory of the physiognomy and personality of the members.' The 'legge' of the 'Compagnia' were published in Dionisotti C.,

dearumque capita: as substantial entities within a concave, seemingly reflective space [Fig. 19.5], often hovering in indeterminate positions.¹²¹ From a humanist perspective, they could be seen to bring together some conventions of contemporary portrait prints with shining instantiations, mirror illusions of Plato's archetypal Forms. The curved and descriptive hatchings are similar to contemporary portrait prints, such as the tondo of Lambert Lombard and the oval print of Philips van Winghe [Figs. 19.15, 19.3]. Yet the divine heads are abstracted by the heavily outlined profiles, they often lack bodies and are situated in a timeless space. The generalisation of the physiognomies and strong contrasts of light and dark produce metallic effects. These strange entities, lacking any surrounding text, are neither naturalistic representations nor diagrams of the obverses of coins.

5 'Wherever the Flow of Our Soul Leads Us': The Endless, Mobile Play of Desire.

Until now, I have drawn little distinction between Ortelius and his friends. Both sought to maintain community and communion in troubled, repressive times, in which the world was undergoing fundamental change. The exchanges activated by ancient coins provided one way of pursuing a desire for an 'elsewhere' in which all tension, conflict and unorthodoxy would dissolve in the light of transcendent love, and difference would be acknowledged but reconciled in a 'numismatic' whole. The transposition of the frame drawings meant that in the *Album amicorum* the visual and verbal expressions of named, embodied individuals could be physically inserted into the circular space/place in which, in the different but connected context of the *Deorum dearumque capita*, abstract virtues and qualities, astrological powers and ancient deities mingled together in an immortal, transcendent Rome.

Prose e Rime di Pietro Bembo (Turin: 1960) 669–703, esp. 700. See also Burke, "Humanism and Friendship" 267.

121 All the plates are reproduced at Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (BSB) "Ortelius A., *Deorum Dearumque capita*": https://bildsuche.digitale-sammlungen.de/index.html?c=band_segmente&bandnummer=bsb00070994&pimage=00021&l=en (accessed 07-01-17). Cunnally, *Images of the Illustrious* 205 notes that 'The portraits are drawn with great detail and strong chiaroscuro, creating the uncoinlike effect of three-dimensional heads within a concave niche.' Some of the heads in the prints are situated more firmly in space, but most of the drawings for the frames of these heads were omitted from the *Album*.

Back on earth in sixteenth-century Antwerp, however, Ortelius was the owner and dedicatee of the *Album amicorum*, and in control of its overall conception. The entries not only worked to create and sustain, through the power of art and rhetoric, an ideal community of virtuous equals but also to honour the wealthy, learned, authoritative figure at the centre of the circle. Although Ortelius eschewed political office, his receipt of the title of Royal Geographer to Philip II of Spain in November 1573 raised him within the traditional social hierarchy and placed him, symbolically, close to the sovereign, above the normal run of merchants and scholars. This elevated and secure position seems to have been one of the reasons for initiating his album, in which the first entries date from January 1574. They and the other contributions, made over a period of more than twenty years, almost unfailingly refer to his royal position or prowess as a geographer.¹²²

The texts and dedications also, repeatedly, characterise Ortelius as a super-human being who can move across and between earth and heaven. Puns and anagrams on his name (which are types of exchange) link him with both the sun and the earth. For example, Van Aecken and others allude to the fact that, by combining German with Latin, the name Ortelius could be deciphered as 'the place of the sun' ('ort-helios'). Others contributed clever Latin anagrams on his name: 'Musae Orbis Alatur' ('that the World should be nourished by the Muse') and 'Mera tua laus Orbis' ('your pure praise of the World').¹²³ This exchange between Ortelius's own name and his great work, the *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, links him with the terrestrial world and at the same time offered contributors to the album many opportunities to characterise him as a celestial 'orb', an illuminating light, like the sun, or an eye roving across space and time to bring the entire universe into a single artefact.¹²⁴ He was attributed god-like powers.

Because the primary meaning of the nominative 'Orbis' is circle, the atlas and Ortelius himself are also specifically implicated in the central motif of the album and the understanding of the circle as an all-encompassing symbol of unity and eternity. The Eucharistic wafer was of course circular—and numismatic¹²⁵—and in the Hermetic tradition, which was espoused by Marsilio Ficino and certainly known to some of Ortelius's friends, 'God is an infinite

122 Harris, "Het *Album Amicorum*" 122.

123 Ortelius, *Album* 98r. Van Aecken; 54v. Jan de Gruytere (1560–1627); 115r. Balthasar Moretus (1574–1641); 103r. Gerard van Cork (1526–1595).

124 Ortelius characterised geography as 'the eye of history' in the preface to the *Theatrum orbis terrarum* and on the title page of his *Parergon* (first edition 1579). See also Meganck *Erudite Eyes* 190–192.

125 Shell M., *Art and Money* (Chicago: 1995) 14–16.

sphere, the centre of which is everywhere and the circumference nowhere.¹²⁶ Whilst it is not known whether this kind of thinking was a conscious motivation for the entire album, it may explain why a number of the central circles in the frame drawings were left blank. In the frame drawing for 'Peace' the circle is empty of any figurative device but delicately tinted in pale blue, like the infinite heavens.¹²⁷ On the opposite page there is a dedication signed, uniquely, by three men: 'for you Ortelius, the triad of one mind/soul so that the circle ['orbis'] of this album closes on the solid number three. That the gods preserve for all the centuries all the friends of one mind/soul whom Ortelius secures in his album.'¹²⁸ Like the Chi-Rho, discussed earlier, a secure, closed circle of peace was appropriate to a work which was concerned with creating a stable, supportive, expansive community in a time of conflict, disintegration and change. At the same time the little book was a personal monument to Ortelius—an immortal product of a creative soul which, towards the end of its embodied life, claimed not to be bound 'to a place, or to a time, or to men, but to God only'.¹²⁹

In 1576 the Spanish physician Alvarez Nuñez (d. 1603), inserted a device of a contemporary hand holding a richly bound book about the size of the album into the frame drawing for Mars, god of war [Fig. 19.13]. The accompanying motto is 'A monument more durable than bronze.'¹³⁰ Yet I have argued that the meaning and value of this monument were created and sustained by material and symbolic transpositions and exchanges which become possible when a solid metal is circulated, or melted down to create something new. In the album of friends, subjectivity is sustainable because it is *not* a fixed entity but mobile and supple. Named, distinguished figures are inseparable from their network of contacts and supremely skilled in all kinds of exchange and translation.

This relational subjectivity is epitomised by Ortelius himself who, whilst extremely learned, was at heart an entrepreneur in the literal sense of taking things between.¹³¹ Like his close friend and contributor to the album, the

126 Hudry F., *Le livre des XXIV philosophes: résurgence d'un texte du IV^e siècle* (Paris: 2009) 35 and passim.

127 Ortelius, *Album* 61r.

128 Ortelius, *Album* 60v. Arnold Mylius (1540–1604), Theodore Poelman (1508–1581), Victor Ghyselincx (1543–1591). Compare Broecke, *Ortelius* 318.

129 See above, note 27.

130 Ortelius, *Album* 89r: 'monumentum ære perennius'. The binding depicted in the drawing is similar to the fragment of tooled leather binding bound into the back of the actual book.

131 See, for example, Rikken M., "Abraham Ortelius as intermediary for the Antwerp animal trailblazers", *Yearbook for the European Culture of Science*, vol. 6 (2012) 95–128. Ortelius's



FIGURE 19.13 Entry for Alvarez Nuñez (d. 1603), 1576, Abraham Ortelius, *Album Amicorum*, fol. 88v–89r (with laid-down drawing of the frame for ‘Mars’ in *Deorum Dearumque Capita*).

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merchant turned artist and chorographer Joris Hoefnagel (1542–1601), Ortelius was an exceptionally mobile subject.¹³² The two men moved easily and agilely between mercantile, artistic, humanist and courtly circles and made numerous physical journeys (some of them together), during which Ortelius seamlessly combined monetary dealings with gift exchange, buying and selling with

creativity in bringing people and things together can be distinguished from the originality of his close friend and contributor to the *Album*, the cartographer Gerardus Mercator, who in 1569 produced a new, mathematical projection for a world map. See further Broecke, *Ortelius* 359–379.

¹³² Hoefnagel's entry: Ortelius, *Album* 7r–v. On Hoefnagel compare Bass M.A., “Patience Grows. The first roots of Joris Hoefnagel's emblematic art” in Melion – Rothstein – Weemans, *Anthropomorphic Lens* 145–178.

sacred friendship, humanist study with gathering materials for his profitable cartographic and ethnographic publications.

For, like the *Album amicorum*, the *Theatrum orbis terrarum* was a collective work. It republished, and brought together in portable format with informative texts, numerous maps of various regions of the world which had been previously drawn and published by cartographers throughout Europe. Like the *Album amicorum*, it depended upon an active network of contacts whose contributions exhibited extensive knowledge and learning. In the *Theatrum*, these values were disseminated and monetised by replication in print, whereas the uniqueness of the manuscript album placed it beyond price.¹³³ We have seen that in the album the dynamics of friendship and love were ultimately centred upon the authority at the centre of the circle: Ortelius and ultimately the God to whom he was bound. In the material realm, the monetary profits made by the *Theatrum* accrued to Ortelius, although he was careful to acknowledge his sources and was clearly hospitable and generous.

The relational, dynamic and ultimately *mercantile* subjectivity exemplified in the album and epitomised by Ortelius bears comparison with Hermes/Mercury, the god of trade and eloquence, communication and financial gain. It also brings to mind Eros/Cupid, who is described in Plato's *Symposium* by the host Agathon as eternally youthful, fleet of foot, tender and agile:

He is the youngest then, and most delicate, and in addition he has a fluid, supple shape. For he could not twine himself round in every direction and through every soul and yet escape notice when first entering and departing if he were hard.¹³⁴

Agile, elusive and pervasive, these common features of Mercury and Cupid (literally 'desire') are also characteristic of money and currency, which are, conceptually, notoriously difficult to pin down. "Frozen Desire", the evocative title of James Buchan's valuable 1997 publication on the history and meaning of

133 On Ortelius's consciousness of the economies of money and virtue in relation to the album, see his letter to Van Meteren about Sambucus foolishly paying to make dedications to people in his *Emblemata*: Visser, *Learned Image* 75, 120, referring to Hessels, *Epistulae* no. 148, 343.

134 Allen, *Symposium* 196a, 137. Compare the device on the reverse of the 1578 portrait medal of Ortelius attributed to Jacob Jonghelink (1530–1606). A serpent coils through a pile of books and raises its head to link them to, and pierce through, a globus cruciger, a symbol of Christian authority that had long been used on coins. Smolderen L., *Jacques Jonghelinck Sculpteur, medailleur et graveur de sceaux (1530–1606)*, Publications d'histoire de l'art et d'archéologie de l'Université Catholique de Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve: 1996) no. 93 343.

money, captures something of the paradox of converting the violent, unending quests of fiery hunger into the cooled, tangible form of a metal coin, if only for a single, melting instant.¹³⁵

I therefore want to conclude by speculating that the love that is the animating spirit of Ortelius's beautiful *Album amicorum* resides as much in the fluent, wandering line and the watery palette as in the stable central circle. Linear dynamics can be discerned in the purely calligraphic dimension of the texts, which combines the presence of diverse, individual hands, located in time and place, with the universal aspirations of a humanist community. Endless, linear play is also evident in Vredeman de Vries's and Van Groenningen's framing grotesques, *parerga* in which a supremely skilful pen interlaces strap-work and other ornamental and quasi-architectural motifs with a wonderful variety of natural and fantastical figures, faces, birds and beasts, fruit, flowers and fabrics to create a lively and fecund impression [Figs. 19.2, 19.4, 19.8, 19.13]. A number of the texts describe being able to stay safely at home and yet, through the sacred bond of love, and with the help of images (maps) and imagination, also to follow Ortelius to unknown, unexplored regions in an unending quest for knowledge of the world and its wonders.¹³⁶ Yet the space of the grotesque is logically impossible; the effects of animation, abundance and structure are the result of artful dissimulation, engendering constant movement of the eyes. This preeminently visual and imaginary world would collapse if an attempt were ever made to pin it down to a stable, physical truth. The currency of desire thus arguably gives the *illusion* of freedom, whilst protecting, even confining, the subject. Van Hagen's entry speaks of an intertwined, impenetrable hedge encircling a place in which those threatened with destruction can huddle together.¹³⁷

We have seen that the delicate blue-grey hue that permeates the *Album* was both set by the drawings of the framing grotesques and at times used to evoke the infinite, celestial orb. It is also suggestive of flowing water, which figured prominently in the album as the preeminent medium of human mobility—with its attendant risks.¹³⁸ As mentioned, Melchior Lorck's circular emblem consists of a formidable but eroded rock on which a ring is poised precariously, its glittering stone pointing into the sky [Fig. 19.9]. The rock is surrounded by stormy 'calligraphic' seas and the balance of the ring is maintained in the

135 Buchan J., *Frozen Desire. An Inquiry into the Meaning of Money* (London: 1997).

136 For instance, Ortelius, *Album* fol. 59v (Ghyselinck); 84r–85r (Dousa); 98r–v (Van Aecken).

137 Ortelius, *Album* fol. 21v. Derrida J., 'Parergon' in *The Truth in Painting* (Chicago: 1987) 18–147. Compare Heuer, *The City Rehearsed* 99–135.

138 From this perspective, the presence of red in the album is evocative of blood. Zorach R., *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold. Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance* (Chicago: 2005) 33–34.

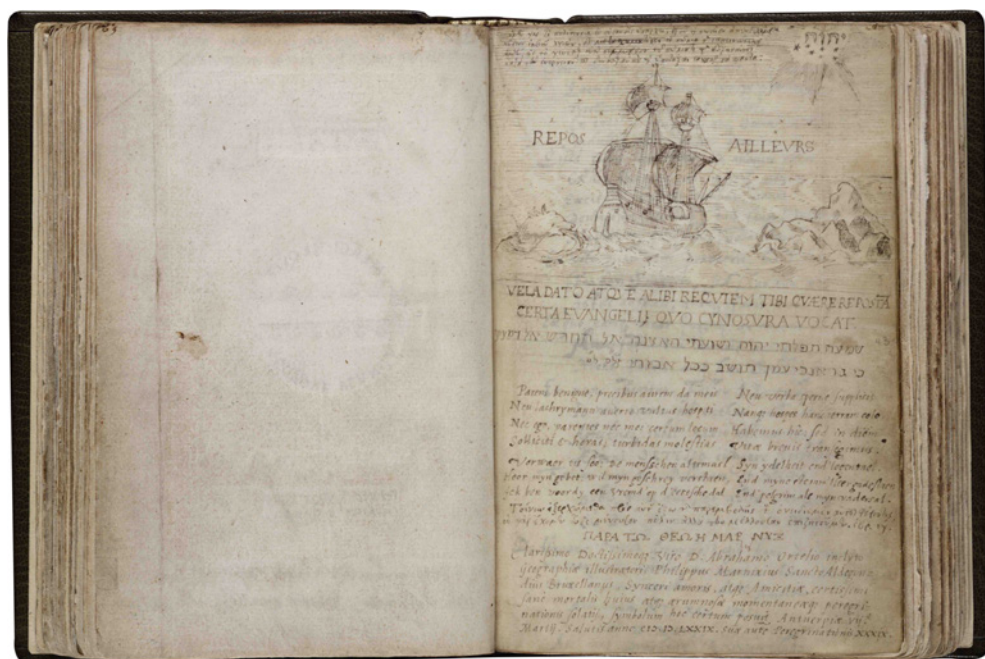


FIGURE 19.14 *Entry for Philip de Marnix (1540–1598), 1579, Abraham Ortelius, Album Amicorum, fol. 43r.*

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face of powerful winds.¹³⁹ In 1579 Philip de Marnix (1540–1598), a writer and a military commander of William of Orange (1533–1584), contributed a drawing of a ship on stormy seas navigating between a rock and a giant sea creature [Fig. 19.14]. In the sky, there are shining stars and the word God in Hebrew, but no unifying (circular) sun. The frameless entry extends to the edge of the page and the folio is crammed with texts in a number of languages, ancient and modern. They are desperate, Biblically-inspired pleas for the presence of a God who can no longer be seen.

For us, our city is in the heavens [...]. Present your sails to the wind and search elsewhere for the repose that awaits you [...]. Do not remain silent when you see my tears, because I am a stranger in your presence, a simple passer-by like my forefathers. Magnanimous Father, incline your ears to

139 Ortelius, *Album* 22r.



FIGURE 19.15 *Entry for Lambert Lombard (1505–1566), n.d., Abraham Ortelius, Album Amicorum, fol. 51r.*

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my prayers [...], do not turn your face from a traveller in tears, because it is a traveller that I am on this earth; neither I nor my ancestors have a fixed home here. [...].¹⁴⁰

Up in Leiden in 1580, five years after the Dutch city's liberation from the Spanish siege, Cornelis van Aecken, alias Aquanus, had found a solution for such despair in a universe of enticing and satisfying images. I have shown how he established an 'Exchange' which, with the help of good company, wine and money, transformed earthly Leiden into a utopian 'Rome in Batavia' filled with prestigious and interesting things, including antique coins. Yet alongside such

¹⁴⁰ Ortelius, *Album* 43r. For the translation I consulted Puraye, *Album* 38–39 (French) and Broecke Ortelius 314 (English). Puraye, *Album* 38–39 cites Paul's Epistle to the Philippians 3:20–21, Psalms 39:13 and Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews 13: 13–14 as sources for Marnix's appeal for God to listen.

embodied exchanges within a universal currency, he expressed pleasure in discrete representations—or illusions—that both acknowledged difference from a distant, unknown site of knowledge and value, and provided a way imaginatively to overcome this separation. Van Aecken's Latin poem praises Ortelius for daring to cut up the world into many images [*Tabulas*'] and to make them accessible to him 'by your virtue and the genius of your *Theatrum*'. 'Things which are almost unknown, and which one cannot enjoy except through a sort of cloud, are presented to the eyes, to the senses of mankind.'¹⁴¹ Aquanus then embarks on vivid imaginary journeys across the world in both space and time, showing off his learning. Punning on the watery connotations of the name Aquanus, the text concludes that from the painted images (maps) of the *Theatrum* one can learn the configuration of the entire world,

[...] wherever the flow of our soul leads us and, secure at home, ploughs the marine waves with an adventurous spirit. Since that is possible for us, you will never see my sails, savage north wind, rainy south wind. But, dear Abraham, you will lead Aquanus in your tracks, without having need to leave his household gods and we will settle with you, the Muse Urania, in Olympus where she is at home.¹⁴²

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141 Ortelius, *Album* 98r: 'Quod notius Orbe/ Namq. tuo: quem tu tenui suspendere charta/ In varias sectum Tabulas radio ausus; ut ante/ Qui ingnorabilis, & quasi per nebulam usurpandus/ Humanis oculis ac sensibus objiceretur.'

142 Ortelius, *Album* 98r: '[....] quocunque animi nos abripit aes tus/lre domi; ac fluctus tuto sulcare marinos/ Mente vaga. cuius fuerit dum copia nobis,/ Nunquam saeve Aquilo, nunquam mea vela videbis/ Imbricator Auster: patrios sed, Abrame, Penates/Servantem, tua per vestigia ducet Aquanum/ Vranie, & socio tecum nos sistet Olympo.'

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Frans Francken the Younger's *Discovery of Achilles*: Desire, Deception, and Inalienable Possession

Lisa Rosenthal

Early modern Antwerp has been described as a city shaped by ‘trading values’, invested in material and intellectual production and exchange, especially involving the making and consumption of a wide range of luxury goods. Panel paintings circulated in this environment as a distinct kind of luxury product in which the effects of mimesis, narrative, and allegory could be deployed to reflect upon their status and function. In pictures destined for the high-end marketplace, Antwerp’s painters created numerous ways to interrogate the intersection of material, monetary, and symbolic values in the visual arts.¹ Such self-reflexive inquiry mobilized discourses describing art as an object of desire, and collecting as motivated by love. In this essay I will focus on Frans Francken the Younger’s *Achilles among the Daughters of Lycomedes*, a painting which, as I will argue, inventively proposes a range of potential motivations for the collector of luxury objects. The picture promotes the collecting of finely-crafted and beautiful things that convey wealth, learned discernment, and virtuous desire, while also offering the fantasy of an unmediated and fully inalienable mode of possession that stands apart from the endlessly uncertain, negotiated values of money and status.

Frans Francken the Younger’s *Achilles among the Daughters of Lycomedes*

In Francken’s *Achilles among the Daughters of Lycomedes*, ca. 1627, a collection of beautifully rendered objects is laid out for view [Fig. 20.1]. Paintings fill the back wall and several small sculpted figures stand upon the mantelpiece. A large cabinet that is opened up to reveal its painted panels fills the right-hand corner and supports a massive bouquet of flowers. Highly-wrought urns, vases, and vessels of all sorts are arrayed on tables and on the floor, along with ornate

1 Göttler C. – Ramakers B. – Woodall J. (eds.), “Trading Values in Early Modern Antwerp, An Introduction”, *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 64 (2014) 8–37.



FIGURE 20.1 *Frans Francken the Younger, Achilles Discovered Among the Daughters of Lycomedes* (ca. 1627). Oil on panel, 74 × 105 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre.
 PHOTO: HERVÉ LEWANDOWSKI © RMN – GRAND PALAIS / ART RESOURCE, NY.

chests full of jewelry, yards of silk, and golden dishes and tableware. A great variety of seashells and coral cover the tabletops and are scattered across the mantle. Crammed into this densely-packed array of stuff is a celestial globe bearing the signs of the zodiac and a Ptolemaic armillary sphere, a device used to demonstrate the movement of the celestial bodies. Musical instruments and armaments, including helmet, sword, and shield, fill the foreground along with a pair of large parrots on their perch.

In the left middle ground we see an unfolding drama from the life of Achilles.² Attempting to protect her son from his destiny to die in the Trojan

2 The story of Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes is not in the *Iliad* but is narrated briefly by Odysseus in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 13, lines 152–182: ‘Achilles’ Nereid mother, foreseeing her son’s destruction, had disguised him, and the trick of the clothing that he wore deceived them all, Ajax among the rest. But I placed among women’s wares some arms such

War, Thetis had disguised Achilles as a woman and hidden him among the daughters of Lycomedes, King of Skyros. While in hiding Achilles had fallen in love with Deidameia, one of the King's daughters. Odysseus, however, knew the Greeks would never prevail against Troy without Achilles's warrior prowess, so he devised a trick that would force Achilles to put aside his disguise and take up arms. As we see here, Odysseus, Diomedes, and the Greek captains, disguised as peddlers, have arrived at Lycomedes's palace with a bounty of eye-catching objects for the king's daughters. Achilles reveals his true identity when he seizes the sword and shield buried amidst the feminine finery. We see the first moment of revelation: only the elderly chaperone and Deidameia notice what is occurring while the other daughters remain entranced by the delightful objects on display.

This cabinet-sized picture (74 × 105 cm.) was produced in the mid 1620s by the prolific and well-organized studio of Frans Francken the Younger (1581–1642), a third-generation member of the Francken family dynasty of painters in Antwerp.³ The Francken workshop was predominantly known for small-format pictures of religious, mythological, and allegorical subjects, as well as painted panels for a type of decorated wooden cabinet produced in Antwerp for a wide market [Figs. 20.2–20.3].⁴ The Achilles picture also demonstrates Frans Francken the Younger's important role as one of the originators of gallery or *constcamer* pictures, a genre that arose and flourished in Antwerp in the early decades of the seventeenth century.⁵

Presenting their three trademark types of works—multi-figured history and allegorical subjects, *constcamer* pictures, and furniture panels—the *Discovery of Achilles* displays the multiple forms of skill for which the Francken

as would attract a man. The hero still wore girl's clothing when, as he laid hands on shield and spear, I said to him: 'O son of Thetis, Pergama, doomed to perish, is keeping herself for you! Why do you delay the fall of mighty Troy?' And I laid my hand on him and sent the brave fellow forth to do brave deeds'. See Ovid., *Metamorphoses*, Volume II: Books 9–15. Trans. F.J. Miller. Revised G.P. Goold. Loeb Classical Library 43. (Cambridge, MA: 1916) 238–239. In the *Ars Amatoria* Ovid describes how Deidameia, taken by force, then fell in love in Achilles (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, Book 1, lines 681–709).

3 Härtling U., *Frans Francken der Jüngere (1581–1642), die Gemälde mit Kritischem Oeuvre-katalogue* (Freren: 1989) 317, includes the Louvre picture as cat. no. 305.

4 Baarsen R., *Seventeenth-Century Cabinets* (Amsterdam: 2000) 23–25.

5 Frans Francken the Younger has long been credited as an inventor of the gallery picture: see Filipczak Z., *Picturing Art in Antwerp, 1550–1700* (Princeton: 1987) 62 and note 17 and Rijks M. "Defenders of the Image: Painted Collectors' Cabinets and the Display of Display in Counter-Reformation Antwerp", in *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 65 (2015) 54–82, especially 56.



FIGURE 20.2 *Frans Francken the Younger, Triumph of Neptune and Amphitrite* (1630s). Oil on copper, mounted on wood, 23.5 × 30.9 cm.

CLEVELAND, THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART, GIFT OF MRS. NOAH L. BUTKIN.

workshop was known, including the representation of lively figures and the refined rendering of objects. Evidence suggests that seventeenth-century viewers were enthusiastic about the Louvre painting's manifold attractions, as it is one of at least three closely-related variants attributed to the Francken studio.⁶ Its existence in multiple versions indicates the subject's appeal and demonstrates the importance of modified copies to the commercial success of the Francken enterprise. It also invites our musing upon the relationship between the Achilles narrative and the kinds of cultural work at stake in *constcamer* pictures. While the narrative has been considered mere pretext occasioning the depiction of a surfeit of luxury goods, I will propose here a more purposeful

6 Härting, *Frans Francken der Jüngere* 317, lists two variants as cat. nos. 306 and 307.



FIGURE 20.3 *Cabinet with scenes from Genesis, panels painted by studio of Frans Francken the Younger (ca. 1650). Ebony, walnut, oak with glass, silver, ivory and oil paint, 160 × 108 × 49.5 cm. AMSTERDAM, RIJKSMUSEUM.*

relationship in which the story from antiquity significantly animates the dynamic power of the *constcamer* genre to negotiate a range of values ascribed to collecting.⁷

7 Speth-Holterhoff S., *Les peintres flamands de cabinets d'amateurs au XVII siècle* (Brussels: 1957) 93, describes the narrative scene as a 'prétexte', a claim repeated in Sonino A.S., *Cabinet d'amateur. Le grandi collezioni d'arte nei dipinti dal XVII al XIX secolo* (Milan: 1992) 61.

Constcamer Pictures and the Love of Art

The story of the discovery of Achilles turns upon the capacity of objects to effect an irresistible attraction, penetrating to the truest and deepest nature of the person who would claim possession of them. Situating the discovery of Achilles in a *constcamer* was an inventive accommodation of this narrative subject to the genre of the collection picture, so strongly associated with the Francken studio. More than mere pretext, the narrative opens up the desire for fine goods as a theme implicitly mobilized by the genre. The invention of the *constcamer* picture in Antwerp during the early decades of the seventeenth century has been fundamentally understood in relation to the city's growth as a site of international trade, especially in luxury goods. Vigorous market expansion beginning in the mid-sixteenth century enabled new functions for art as an increasingly commercialized, distinct kind of luxury good for Antwerp's mercantile elite.⁸ Yet even as they promoted the prestige of collecting, *constcamer* pictures were not accurate records of real collections, and most typically did not reproduce actual works of art. Instead the early Antwerp collection pictures were fabricated images that programmatically asserted claims for the multiple values of art as an instrument of piety, knowledge, and virtue that fostered the elevated status of its patrons and admirers.⁹

The Louvre Achilles picture, like other *constcamer* paintings, intertwines its general praise of collecting with specifically local referents. The inclusion of natural specimens, musical instruments, and tools of scientific inquiry refer to the 'encyclopedic' aims of early modern collecting whereby the entire collection was understood to contain the macrocosm in microscopic form, conveying both the mystery of God's wondrous creation and the ingenuity of human arts and sciences.¹⁰ At the same time, the Achilles picture, like other *constcamer* paintings, celebrates the excellence of local arts production in its fictional collection by featuring pictures and objects that were recognizable by their genre and style as works by Antwerp artists and craftsmen. Local civic claims are further promulgated in collection pictures by the familiar

8 Vermeylen F., *Painting for the Market: Commercialization of Art in Antwerp's Golden Age* (Turnhout: 2003).

9 Recent texts listing much of the large and expanding bibliography on collection pictures include Marr A., "The Flemish 'Pictures of Collections' Genre: An Overview", *Intellectual History Review* 20.1 (2010) 5–25; and Suchtelen A. van – Beneden B. van, *Room for Art in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp* (Zwolle: 2009).

10 Härting U., "Doctrina et Pietas: Über Frühe Galeriebilder", *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten te Antwerpen* (1993) 95–133; and Briels J., "De Antwerpse kunstverzamelaar Peeter Steven (1599–1668) en zijn constkamer", *Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen*, (1980) 137–226.

discourses they mobilize. One of these is the Catholic Counter-Reformation defense of the image, an issue of central concern in Antwerp in the aftermath of the iconoclastic violence it suffered in 1566 and 1581.¹¹ Another is the identity of the city as a centre of global commercial trade and a nexus for the production and circulation of goods, information, and new forms of knowledge. The Florentine merchant and humanist Lodovico Guicciardini's *Descrittione di tutti Paese Bassi*, first published in Antwerp in 1567, offers an early account of this view, which became well consolidated in the civic culture of Antwerp by the early seventeenth-century.¹²

Additionally, and central to the focus of this essay, are the specifically local forms of the broader early modern European theories and discourses intertwining the power of love with the power of images. Love as a shared motivation for the consumption and production of art was institutionally codified in the early seventeenth century when the Antwerp painter's guild of Saint Luke created a new category of membership, the '*liefhebbers der schilderijen*' or, literally, 'lovers of painting.' This expansion of guild membership, which was distinct from the membership of professional art dealers, recognized the increasingly important social dimension of art collecting that allowed discerning viewers to share their connoisseurship and good taste.¹³ The specific designation of '*liefhebbers der schilderijen*' or '*constliefhebbers*' that linked the collector's desires to the artist's love of art resonated with current art theory. In his *Schilder-Boek* of 1604, Karel van Mander proclaimed money, honor, and the love of art as the three principle motivations for artists.¹⁴ Love was deemed to be the highest motivation, the one that most fully guaranteed the virtue of the artist whose aspirations exceed worldly gain and fame. Much later in the century Cornelis de Bie would reprise this trinity in *The Golden Cabinet of the Noble, Liberal Art of Painting* (*Het gulden cabinet van de edel vry schilder-const*),

11 See especially Rijks M. "Defenders of the Image".

12 Esser R., "The Diamond of the Netherlands: Histories of Antwerp in the Seventeenth Century", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 64 (2014) 348–368; also Göttler – Ramakers – Woodall, "Trading Values" 8–37.

13 Filipczak, *Picturing Art in Antwerp* 47–57; Honig E., *Painting and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp* (New Haven – London: 1998) 196–212; and Frances Gage F., "Some Stirring or Changing of Place': Vision, Judgement and Mobility in Pictures of Galleries", *Intellectual History Review* 20:1 (2010) 123–145.

14 Mander Karel van, *Het Schilder-Boeck* (Haarlem, Paschier van Wesbusch: 1604), fol. 276 recto: '*Dry dinghem yeder meest le leeren Const beweghen, / T'een Geldt is, tweede Eer, en t'derde Liefd' tot Const*'. These lines stand at the beginning of one of several poems embedded in Van Mander's lengthy life of Cornelis Ketel.

published in Antwerp in 1662.¹⁵ But while Van Mander's trinity of motivations persisted as a conventional formula in the Netherlands throughout the seventeenth century, it did so not as settled consensus but as a point of on-going debate.¹⁶ For if the artist's and the *liefhebber's* love can uphold the virtue of making and possessing beautiful paintings, it does so in a dynamic dialogue with the discourses of honour and profit, recognized by Van Mander as distinct but overlapping systems within which pictures generated exchange value.

Rubens's *Achilles*: Honour, Profit, and Exchange

The story of Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes, was included by Karel van Mander in his *Wtlegghingh* or *Commentary on the Metamorphoses*, Book 5 of the *Schilder-Boeck*.¹⁷ By the mid-1620s, it was already a familiar subject in the visual arts of the Low Countries, where it was taken up by several artists over the course of the following decades.¹⁸ A possible model for Francken's treatment of the subject is Nicolas Ryckmans's engraving after Rubens's painting (ca. 1617–1618) [Figs. 20.4–20.5].¹⁹ The print may well have suggested to Francken the open archway on the left of his composition, Achilles's upward gesture with the sword, the shield with the gorgon's head, and inclusion of the elderly chaperone, distinguished from the comely daughters by her head-covering. At the very least, the circulation of the print after the Achilles picture by Rubens, Antwerp's undisputedly pre-eminent painter in the mid-1620s, would have been strong inducement to take up the theme. The impact of Rubens's composition, known through the Ryckmans print, as well as a later print by Cornelis Visscher, can be seen in many painted versions of the

15 Moran S.J., "The Right Hand of Pictura's Perfection. Cornelis de Bie's *Het gulden cabinet* and Antwerp Art in the 1660s", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 64 (2014) 370–399.

16 Woodall J., "Love is in the Air: Amor as Motivation and Message in Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Painting", *Art History* 19.2 (1996) 208–246, esp. 220 and note 51.

17 Mander Karel van, *Wtlegghingh op den Metamorphosis Pub. Ovidij Nasonis*, in the *Schilder-Boeck*, fol. 95 verso.

18 Jongh E. de, "'Uyt een sacht verwifd leven getrocken'", *Kunstschrift* 56.6 (2012) 20–27.

19 Ryckermans's self-published print is dated by the Rijksprentenkabinet ca. 1616–1636, making it an available source for Francken's Achilles painting. The publisher Pieter Soutman later released a second print after the painting engraved by Cornelis Visscher. On the painting by Rubens, see Díaz Padrón M., *El Siglo de Rubens en el Museo del Prado*, 2 vols. (Madrid: 1995) II 1086–1089 and McGrath E. – Martin G. et.al. *Mythological Subjects. Achilles to the Graces* Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard 11.1 (2 vols) (Antwerp, 2016) 71–85.



FIGURE 20.4 *Peter Paul Rubens (with the assistance of Anthony van Dyck) Achilles Discovered Among the Daughters of Lycomedes (ca. 1617–18). Oil on canvas, 246 × 267 cm. Madrid, Museo del Prado. Inv. 1661.*

PHOTO: ERICH LESSING / ART RESOURCE, NY.

subject, including those by Anthony van Dyck, Erasmus Quellinus II, Jan van Boeckhorst, and Gerard de Lairese.

As in the Rubens picture, and all those that follow upon it, Francken's painting masses the women around the display of goods, increasing the dramatic tension by distinguishing among those who remain engrossed in the objects at hand, and those who are aware of the unfolding events. But the excitement of the narrative moment, and the status of the elevated subject from antiquity, constituted only part of the subject's attractions. We have an account of its



Ecce puellares oculos tractura locantur
Dona, ut quicquid sibi quod placet, inde legat,

Hec Specula, hec celsus nitidos, gemmasque volutat,
Æacides ferrum stringit atroce manu,

Virtutem simul ostentans sexumque virilem,
Corrupti ergo Ithacus ducit ad arma manus.

FIGURE 20.5 Nicolaes Ryckmans, after Peter Paul Rubens, *Achilles Discovered Among the Daughters of Lycomedes* (ca. 1617–1636). Engraving, 47.4 × 36.4 cm. AMSTERDAM, RIJKSMUSEUM.

putative appeal from the surviving correspondence in which Rubens offered his Achilles painting, among several other works, to Sir Dudley Carleton, the English ambassador to The Hague, in exchange for Carleton's collection of antiquities. Along with his letter to Carleton of 28 April 1618, Rubens included a list of the works on offer, each one inventoried with its dimensions and cash value, along with a brief description. He endeavored to captivate Carleton's interest in this picture by describing this canvas as, 'A picture of Achilles dressed as woman done by the best of my pupils, the whole retouched by my hand; a most delightfully diverting picture, and full of many very beautiful young girls'.²⁰ In Rubens's account the 'many very beautiful young girls' explicitly animate the painting's desirability, functioning as a trope for the beauty of his picture. Rubens's rhetoric also implicitly operates in tandem with the picture's theme: just as Lycomedes's daughters are drawn to the alluring display of stuff, so are we ideally drawn to the painting's beauty and charms. Rubens's rhetoric nicely demonstrates how the narrative subject reflects upon art's potency by simultaneously demonstrating the seductive powers of fine objects, beautiful girls, and oil paintings.

Rubens deploys this rhetoric in the service of a tricky exchange in which the picture's stated marketplace value (600 florins, a price exceeded by only one other larger item on the list) is put to pointedly elastic use. In his letter to Carleton, Rubens expresses his disdain for the common practice of establishing exchange value according to 'the rank of the purchaser'; he offers assurances that he has not inflated the prices of his works, but has calculated them 'just as if I were negotiating to sell them for cash; and in this I beg you to rely upon the word of an honest man'. But if the cash value indicates an ostensibly objective price, it can be readily superseded by personal value, a point underscored when Rubens attests to the quality of the works on offer by noting they include 'pictures I have kept for my own enjoyment as well as some that I have even repurchased for more than I had sold them to others'.²¹ In his negotiation with Carleton, Rubens moves smoothly between what Elizabeth Honig

20 Rooses M. – Ruelens C. (eds.) *Correspondance de Rubens et documents épistolaires concernant sa vie et ses oeuvres*, 6 vols. (Antwerp 1887–1909; reprint ed., Doornspijk: 1973) II 137, doc. CLXVI, letter of 28 April 1618 to Sir Dudley Carleton: 'Un quadro di un Achille vestito di donna fatto del miglior mio discepolo, i tutto ritocco de mia mano, quadro vaghissimo e pieno de molte fanciulle bellissime'. Also see Magurn R. (ed.), *The Letters of Peter Paul Rubens* (Evanston: 1955) 61, no. 28. The phrase 'miglior mio discepolo' refers to Anthony van Dyck.

21 Rooses – Ruelens, *Correspondence* 135–136: 'I s'assicuri pur V. E. chio li metterò i prezzi delle mie pitture a punto come se si trattasse da venderle in denari contanti [...]'. Also see Magurn, *Letters* 59–60.

has described as the opposed discourses of the impersonal transactions of art in the marketplace, and the 'system of honor' in which the exchanged object's value is embedded in a social situation, especially pertaining to the status of its maker. These two systems of valuation persisted in uneasy relation to each other throughout early modern Europe where, as Honig remarks, there was no 'widespread critical discourse with which to secure an equation of aesthetic worthiness to market valuation'.²²

Rubens's dealings with Carleton were not, however, equivalent to those of artist and patron or client, but were instead enacted between two collectors co-existing within a circle of elite *liefhhebbers* for whom 'excellence' as an indicator of value was implicitly linked to the work's desirability. Still, as Ariana Tupin has noted, exchange among elite collectors in early modern Europe typically entailed negotiating an unstable mix of market and personal values, along with the 'unquantifiable' value of 'social and political relationships'.²³ The outcome of the deal that Rubens and Carleton brokered demonstrates how variable the perception of excellence could be. In the end, Carleton rejected the Achilles picture, preferring to accept only those works that Rubens had designated as by his own hand. Ten years later Rubens sold it to Philip IV of Spain. Whereas the English knight and ambassador determined the master's hand to be a key indicator of value, the Habsburg emperor had no such compunctions. Captivated by the subject matter, and undeterred by Rubens's lesser role in the work's execution, Philip allowed himself to be seduced by, and sold upon, the painting's delightfully diverting charms.

Gift, Commodity, and Achilles's Sword

The seventeenth-century language of 'honour and profit' accords with our current understanding of the gift and the commodity in early modern Europe. The fine objects offered and exchanged as gifts within and among the courtly

22 Honig E., "Art, Honor, and Excellence in Early Modern Europe", in Hutter M. – Throsby D. (eds.), *Beyond Price: Value in Culture, Economics, and the Arts* (Cambridge: 2008) 89–105, esp. 103. Also see Zell M., "The Gift Among Friends: Rembrandt's Art in the Network of his Patronal and Social Relations", in Chong A. – Zell M. (eds.) *Rethinking Rembrandt* (Zwolle: 2002) 173–193.

23 Honig, "Art, Honor, and Excellence"; and Turpin A., "The Value of a Collection: Collecting Practices in Early Modern Europe", in Munck B. de – Lyna D. (eds.), *Concepts of Value in European Material Culture 1500–1900* (New York: 2015) 255–284. For a recent account of the full range of Carleton and Rubens's negotiations, see Hill R. – Bracken S., "The Ambassador and the Artist", *Journal of the History of Collections* 26.1 (2014) 171–191.

cultures of Europe were valued not only as costly or rare, but operated as 'signifiers of power, honour, and obligation' among those who exchanged them, functioning as reifications of social relationships.²⁴ In Marcel Mauss's theory of the gift, and all of its ensuing commentary and revisions, it is the social embeddedness of gift exchange that is its most salient distinguishing feature: the gift offered must be accepted; once accepted it must be reciprocated. Gift exchange operates within a system of reciprocity in which the exchanged object's value is linked to the status of the persons involved.²⁵ This social context for the gift has traditionally been viewed as distinct from marketplace exchange. But while early twentieth-century definitions of the commodity sought to distinguish its properties as distanced, impersonal, and purely oriented toward profit, from the socially embedded nature of gift exchange, more recent accounts have stressed their similarity.²⁶ This revised view of commodities *and* gifts as *both* capable of functioning as 'incarnated signs' whose use is rhetorical and social is especially apt for the way luxury goods operated in early modern Europe.²⁷ Among the forms of social symbolic value that material objects can convey are the special qualities ascribed to inalienable possessions. Such objects or goods, uniquely affiliated with their owner, are prized for their 'absolute value' as possessions rather than their exchange value.²⁸ Their status as inalienable possessions that are removed from circulation in the marketplace endows them with particular semiotic significance as indicators of honour, or power, or prestige. The expansion of the market for works of art and other luxury goods, and the affiliated rise of the culture of collecting, were the conditions in which crafted objects came to be increasingly valued as commodities. Nonetheless, in early modern Europe objects could fluidly shift their status back and forth from merchandise to precious possession.²⁹ Cabinet-sized oil

24 Honig, "Art, Honor, and Excellence" 93.

25 Mauss M., *The Gift*, trans. I. Cunnison (London: 1966). For responses to Mauss's foundational theory, see the essays in Appadurai A. (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: 2001); and Myers F (ed.), *The Empire of Things* (Santa Fe – Oxford: 2001).

26 Appadurai A., "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value", in Appadurai, *Social Life of Things* 3–63, esp. 10–12.

27 I take the phrase 'incarnated signs' from Appadurai, "Introduction" 38. Also see Munck B. de, "Artisans, Products and Gifts: Rethinking the History of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe", *Past & Present* 224 (2014) 39–74.

28 Weiner A., *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving* (Berkeley: 1992) 37.

29 Ago R., *Gusto for Things*, trans. B. Bouley – C. Tazzara (Chicago: 2013) 1–11.

paintings made for the open market were objects ideally suited to mobilize values as either inalienable possession, or as fungible goods.

Frans Francken the Younger's highly successful workshop was a vital player in the commercialization of painting in the early modern Netherlands; as such it had a particular stake in devising imagery that intertwined art's symbolic and commodity values.³⁰ We can see this, for example, in the repeated inclusion of images of the Adoration of the Magi in *constcamer* pictures from the Francken studio. One example is the picture known as the *Art Cabinet of Sebastian Leerse*, where the magi painting is given special prominence by its large size, the centrality of its position over the mantel, and its distinction as the one work displayed with a protective curtain, now pushed aside to reveal the picture to our sight [Fig. 20.6].³¹ In the context of the depicted art collection, the magi picture offers a specific analogy between on the one hand, precious gifts that designate spiritual love and insight, and on the other hand, collectible pictures that circulate in a marketplace. The analogy resonated strongly in Antwerp where, as Dan Ewing has argued, the subject of the Adoration of the Magi had become a powerful civic iconography denoting the city's identity as a centre of international trade.³² Here the magi image stands in dialogue with the panel propped against the chair, a work that commands our special attention by its foreground position as the only image set at an angle within the depicted space. The subject is Alexander the Great observing Apelles painting Campaspe. Derived from the writing of Pliny the Elder, the tale recounts how Alexander instructed his court artist, Apelles, to paint a portrait of Campaspe, the most beautiful of the Emperor's mistresses. Seeing that Apelles had fallen in love while painting her, Alexander magnanimously gave the woman to the artist, choosing the enduring value of art over the transitory attractions of nature. The story was a familiar motif in the early modern European encomium to painting. Here in the *constcamer*, the Apelles image signals the trope

30 Peeters N., "Marked for the Market? Continuity, Collaboration and the Mechanics of Artistic Production of History Painting in the Francken Workshops in Counter-Reformation Antwerp", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 50 (1999) 58–79; and Peeters N., "From Nicolaas to Constantijn: the Francken Family and Their Rich Artistic Heritage (ca. 1550–1717)", in Brosenes K. – Kelchtermans L. – Stighelen K. van der (eds.), *Family Ties: Art Production and Kinship Patterns in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Turnhout: 2012) 103–117.

31 Suchtelen – Beneden, *Room for Art* 122, disputes the connection of this image with Sebastiaan Leerse. See their checklist no. 8 for *Art Cabinet with Unknown Family*, ca. 1615.

32 Ewing D., "Magi and Merchants: The Force behind the Antwerp Mannerist's Adoration Pictures", *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* (2005–2006) 275–299.



FIGURE 20.6 *Frans Francken the Younger, Art Cabinet of Sebastian Leerse (ca. 1615). Oil on panel, 78 × 115.2 cm. Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten. © KIK-IRPA, BRUSSELS.*

asserting love as a motivation fundamental to art's praiseworthy aspects: artist and patron are both moved by love to possess the object of their desires. At the same time, the picture's seemingly provisional appearing placement in the depicted space underscores its status as a material object that circulates in a dynamic marketplace. This association of art with merchandise was already operating in seventeenth-century discourses; it occurs, for example, in Van Mander's text where he likens the appeal of well-composed pictures to nicely arranged goods displayed on a shop's shelves.³³ In a device repeated in many of the Francken collection pictures, there is no room left to hang the Apelles picture on the wall; with the chair as its temporary support, the picture seems to have only recently entered the collection. This repeated trope of 'overflow' pictures propped against furniture performs a complex kind of work in the

33 Van Mander, *Den grondt der edel vry schilder-const*, chapter 5, fol. 18 recto, verse 34, *Schilder-Boek* (1604).

Francken studio collection pictures. It signals the marketplace mobility of pictures, their fungible quality, as the conditions of collecting while also demonstrating that once firmly lodged within the stable display of the *constkamer*, pictures can shed their commodity values and function as inalienable possessions. The *constkamer*, in Francken's representations of it, both overlaps, and is distinct from, the merchant's shop where everything is for sale.

Returning to the Achilles picture, we can see how the narrative augments the codes of the gift and commodity with an additional paradigm of possession. The hero's grasp upon the objects he claims obviates all operations of exchange, i.e., those structures through which both commerce and gifts produce value. When Achilles seizes the sword and shield he is not compelled by the *liefhebber's* love of art, encompassing the connoisseur's subtle expertise and the collector's desire for encyclopedic knowledge; neither is Achilles's act one of a buyer's or connoisseur's discernment, but rather, something opposite to these in that his claim on the arms is inevitable, true, and utterly revealing of his most essential identity. This gesture stands apart from the collector's considered selection of objects that convey his *burgerlijk* concerns, as instruments of social, spiritual, and civil self-fashioning. Achilles does not take hold of these objects as goods that circulate in a marketplace, nor as materials that can be exchanged as signs of honour, but as immediate, inalienable instruments of his fate. Achilles's sword, in other words, cuts across the discourses of profit and honour as he performs the direct, natural, unmediated possession of the object that reveals and confirms his true self.

Achilles's already completed grab for the weapons contrasts with the action of the women who enact the pleasures of choosing from among a surfeit of options as they continue to handle, point at, and discuss the array of goods on the table. Notably, in his very brief account of the episode in the *Wtlegghingh*, Van Mander includes the detail that Odysseus and Diomedes arrive at Lycomedes's palace in the guise of peddlers (*sachmen*).³⁴ Francken underscores this aspect of the ruse by distinguishing between the simple robes that disguise Odysseus and Diomedes, who stand on either side of Achilles, and the helmets and armor of two Greek captains who help them seize Achilles once he has revealed himself. Viewed within the narrative framework, the stuff that fills the room has been offered as peddlers' wares. With its dazzling depiction of things on display, Francken's composition fully elaborates the contrast between the women's deliberative process of delicately handling and carefully scrutinizing fine merchandise with all the care and sociability of shrewd shoppers, and the immediacy of Achilles's action as he seizes the weapons, thrusting his arm

34 Van Mander, *Wtlegghingh*, fol. 95 verso.

through the shield's handles and brandishing the sword with an upward gesture. At the same time, the picture compels us to experience this contrast as two distinct modes of looking, one accommodated to the dramatic action of narrative, and the other that turns away from time, narrative, and heroic telos in order to dwell upon the surfaces of the stuff laid out to view. We might understand Francken's image as purposefully activating the viewer's dual desires for both narrative and visual pleasures, and for the differing kinds of knowledge they offer.

The array of objects that fills Francken's picture far exceeds the clothing, ornaments, and other 'trinkets that women desire' mentioned by Van Mander and instead, as noted above, encompasses the broad encyclopedic structure that organizes many early seventeenth-century collection pictures. We are invited to admire specimens of natural beauty and wonder, in the shells and flowers; the arts of painting, metalwork and ceramics; and objects of human devising such as the musical instruments, armor, and globe. The large richly-decorated vessels in the centre foreground are a type that appear in other works by Francken, acting as a kind of signature motif that invites our sustained visual delectation.³⁵

Desire, Disguise, and Deception

Yet, even as Francken's painting irresistibly invites our loving visual attention and delight, we are reminded of how readily our vision is fooled. Deception is another element of the tale of the discovery of Achilles that is here inventively intertwined with the overarching stakes of the *constkamer* genre. The narrative centre of the picture is a double deception: Odysseus and Diomedes, warriors posing as peddlers, trick Achilles, a warrior posing as a girl, into revealing his true identity. The composition offers us a clear view of Achilles, still in his female guise, reclaiming his manhood. It is worth noting that the painter makes no attempt in his rendering of Achilles to indicate his masculinity but instead maintains the convention of a fairer tone for female flesh, and dresses the figure in diaphanous fabric that reveals the body. Yet, because he chooses the sword and shield, we, like Odysseus, know this pretty girl, sweetly accessorized with pearl earrings, to be Achilles. We are invited both to enjoy

35 See, for example, the *Allegory of Pictura Sacra*, Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest. For further discussion, Härtling U., "Blumenbuketts in Prunkvasen. Frans Francken II – Andreis Daniels – Philips de Marlier", in Radványi O. (ed.), *Geest en Gratie: Essays Presented to Ildokó Ember on her Seventieth Birthday* (Budapest: 2012) 34–39.

and be undeceived by appearances as Francken mobilizes our recognition of both states—we know it is he, despite the delicate features and milky flesh. Recalling Rubens's description of his Achilles picture as 'most delightfully diverting and full of many very beautiful girls', we might infer that seeing, and seeing through, the guise of gender reversal is part of the delight.

Francken further underscores the theme of cross-dressing as disguise in the mythological scene depicted on the opened cabinet door. Here Jupiter seduces the nymph Callisto, appearing to her in the guise of Diana wearing her crescent moon as a diadem, but truthfully revealed to us by his attribute, the eagle, that stands at his feet.³⁶ The broad interest, in seventeenth-century Netherlandish art, in scenes of gender reversal certainly had much to do with the endlessly uncertain project of defining gender difference in a culture steeped in the Aristotelian tradition where such difference was understood as one of degree rather than of kind. As I have written elsewhere, representing such gender reversals seemed to require reassurance, such as that provided here by Achilles's triumphant brandishing of the sword, that the effeminized man *will* reclaim his masculinity.³⁷ The sword functions both as an instrument of the deception that Odysseus deploys, and as the sign that Achilles's heroic virtue has been restored; it is a device of trickery and a guarantor of the truth.

In the context of the *constcamer*, the trickery of disguise overlaps with the rhetoric developed by Van Mander and others regarding painting's power delightfully to seduce us by deceiving our eyes.³⁸ Seduction and delightful deceptions abound in Francken's composition that privileges our visual desire and invites close and sustained attention to elements of order and variety, diversity and harmony. Objects that appear similar are different and unique; unique objects rhyme with, or echo, other ones. The world of the mythic past is brought into an eternal and timeless present where we can recognize in the paintings on the wall the style of contemporary Antwerp artists, such as the rocky landscape on the left, typical of Joos de Momper. In an especially witty play with multiple registers of artifice, the oversized bouquet displayed on the ebony cabinet appears to be a Jan Brueghel flower painting come to life;

36 On the popularity of the Diana and Callisto story in Dutch art, see Sluijter E.J., *De 'heyden-sche fabulen' in de Schilderkunst van de Gouden Eeuw* (Leiden: 2000) 112–118.

37 Rosenthal L., *Gender, Politics, and Allegory in the Art of Rubens* (Cambridge – New York: 2005) 113–166.

38 See most recently Vanhaelen A. – Wilson B., "The Erotics of Looking: Materiality, Solicitation and Netherlandish Culture", *Art History* 35.5 (2012) 874–885. Honig, *Painting and the Market* 30–31, discusses Van Mander's use of this trope to demonstrate painting's capacity to seduce the viewer's eye within a 'particularly economic context'.

Brueghel's flower pictures combining specimens that would never bloom at the same time, were praised at the time as artful fictions that could vie with nature [Fig. 20.7].³⁹ And as we saw in the *Sebastian Leerse* painting, the image over the mantel, with a curtain drawn back heightening the effect of revelation, declaims a unifying allegorical motif for the whole [Fig. 20.6].⁴⁰ The mantelpiece painting in the Louvre *Discovery of Achilles*, recalling similar ones by Hendrick van Balen, depicts Minerva instructing the muses; within the space of the *constkamer*, it asserts art's virtue by assuring us that the muses' comely charms and diverting deceits will serve the aims of Wisdom.

However, the *liefhebber's* pleasurable experience of artifice as a form of trickery did not extend to tricky business in the art market. Achilles's unmediated affinity with the sword and shield circumvents the need for deliberated choice: he has no need to exercise the kinds of knowledge that serve the buyer's most virtuous desires, nor does he need to scrutinize objects in order to avoid deception in the marketplace. The marketplace, where art functions as a commodity, and the buyer is always at risk, is, of course, the same world that conditioned the Francken studio's production. We know that early modern merchants and their customers shared widespread distrust and fear of being cheated in the marketplace, including in the art market.⁴¹

This painting, hence, animates the full range of how deception might register, from delightful artifice, to clever ruse, to dishonesty in the marketplace. In fact, the market itself is turned into an effect of trickery where the bounty of luxury goods, laid out for our view, resembles and comprises a *feigned* marketplace staged as part of Odysseus's cunning scheme. An ersatz display of merchandise that looks like a fictional collection, the picture simultaneously evokes and confounds networks of commerce or of honour while offering the fantasy of an unmediated mode of direct possession. On one hand, the sword

39 Brenninkmeijer-de Rooij B., *Roots of Seventeenth-Century Flower Painting* (Leiden: 1996) 47–71.

40 Stoichita V., *The Self-Aware Image: An Insight in Early Modern Meta-Painting*, trans. A.-M. Glasheen (Cambridge: 1997) 112, refers to this as the 'altar' position for an image depicted in a gallery picture.

41 Mathias P., "Strategies for Reducing Risk by Entrepreneurs in the Early Modern Period", in Lesger C. – Noordegraaf L. (eds.), *Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship in Early Modern Times* (Den Haag: 1995) 5–24. On deception in the art market, see Honig E. "The Beholder as a Work of Art", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 46 (1995) 253–293. Celeste Brusati discusses art's 'praiseworthy deceptions' as a broadly deployed trope in the seventeenth-century literature on the arts in Brusati C., *Artifice and Illusion: The Art and Writing of Samuel van Hoogstraten* (Chicago: 1995). See especially 138–168; the phrase cited above is on p. 162.



FIGURE 20.7 Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Bouquet of Flowers* (ca. 1610–1620). Oil on panel, 66 × 50.5 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

PHOTO: ERICH LESSING / ART RESOURCE, NY.

and shield are devices of trickery. On the other, they operate as instruments of fate endowed with agency, that call to Achilles, circumventing the mechanisms, and possible machinations, of exchange in order to exert the force of an inalienable affinity.

Conclusion

Francken's picture offers not only an array of delightful eye-fooling stuff, but also a variety of possible relationships to its illusions. It stimulates our visual desire, while reminding us that appearances can be deceiving; it promotes narrative pleasure, while positing a continual present; it advertises the range of genres and distinguishing characteristics of the commercially successful Francken brand, while dramatizing an ideally inalienable mode of possession compelled by forces outside of marketplace exchange. The Louvre painting's variants all uphold the basic composition with the narrative scene unfolding in the left middle-ground; each version is set in a room with a central mantelpiece and two laden tables, and each features a depicted space densely crowded with objects to produce the effect of rich abundance [Fig. 20.8]. While the depictions of individual objects vary, all the variants maintain the overall range and diversity of the encyclopedic array. Each distinct version produces the same idea of the collection as both a coherent unity and an aggregate of heterogeneous elements.

Among the myriad items dispersed across the floor in all of the variants is a distinct weapon with a carved handle. The weapon is a *kris*, a type of Javanese dagger known and collected in Europe as a valuable item of exotica since the late sixteenth century.⁴² The *kris* is depicted in other collection pictures attributed to Frans Francken the Younger. In the *Cabinet of a Collector*, for example, it is situated amid a collection comprising paintings, drawings, coins, shells, and preserved sea creatures including a dried seahorse [Fig. 20.9].⁴³ The picture thematizes the pursuit of spiritual understanding and worldly knowledge in contrast to the destruction of objects denoting the arts, sciences, and Catholic faith by figures whose donkey heads identify them as embodiments of ignorance.⁴⁴ Displayed hanging on the wall, the *kris* clearly registers its status as an item of curiosity and a collectible object. Its figured handle invites contrast and comparison with the Raphael drawing of a Madonna on its right,

42 Lach D. – Kley E. van, *Asia in the Making of Europe, Vol. II: A Century of Wonder. Book One: The Visual Arts* (Chicago – London: 1970) 95.

43 For a nuanced discussion of how the *kris* operates in this picture's staging of worship, iconoclasm, idolatry, curiosity, and connoisseurship see Göttler, C. "Indian daggers with idols' in the early modern *constkamer*. Collecting, picturing, and imagining 'exotic' weaponry in the Netherlands and beyond", *Netherlandish Art in its Global Context*, eds. Jorink E. – Scholten, F. – Weststein, T., *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 66 (2016). I am grateful to Christine Göttler for generously sharing with me her manuscript of this essay in advance of its publication.

44 Rijks, "Defenders of the Image" 66–68 discusses this picture in relation to the Counter-Reformation insistence upon the unity of material form and spiritual meanings.



FIGURE 20.8 *Studio of Frans Francken the Younger, Achilles Among the Daughters of Lycomedes* (ca. 1620–30). Oil on panel, 55 × 78.7 cm.

THE HAGUE, COLLECTION RKD—NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR ART HISTORY.

while its ornately carved tip rhymes with the arabesque design of the adjacent pearl pendant. Its vertical orientation echoes the rectilinear organization of the wall as a field of display and serves to lock the *kris* into its proper position in the composition as a whole. The place of the *kris* within the ‘display of display’ operates quite differently here from the Achilles picture (and its variants), where the *kris* is the object in closest proximity to the viewer.⁴⁵ In the Louvre painting, its tip extends to the very foreground plane, almost piercing the distance between the onlooker and the depicted world. The *kris* that seems to be almost within our grasp resonates productively with the sword that Achilles has already seized. The two weapons are formally linked, as their axes intersect and echo the x formed in the centre of the image by the banner and other arms beneath the mantelpiece. At the same time, the *kris* is positioned in strict parallel to the edge of the table where Lycomedes’ daughters have gathered; the weapon establishes a visual contrast to the table’s array of quintessentially

45 I borrow the phrase ‘display of display’ from the title of Rijks, “Defenders of the Image”.



FIGURE 20.9 Frans Francken the Younger, *The Cabinet of a Collector* (1616). Oil on panel, 76.7 × 119.1 cm. London, Royal Collection Trust.

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‘feminine’ shells and vessels that delight the women.⁴⁶ Whereas in the *Cabinet of a Collector* the kris is firmly contained within the stable framing of the wall display, here it invites us to conceive of our claim upon it as a physical act. The object is replete with meaning: as an alluring piece of exotica it contributes to the *constcamer*’s overarching allegory of encyclopedic knowledge; it refers to the ‘trading values’ of Antwerp’s luxury commercial enterprises that import and export goods all around the globe; and it signifies as a distinctly masculine instrument of honour and power. It invites, in other words, all the intertwined and overlapping desires for the exchange values—material, monetary, and symbolic—so richly at play in many of the Francken *constcamer* pictures. But it also specifically invites the merchant-collector viewer’s imagined capacity to lay claim, as does Achilles, to an inalienable object that is fated to be his.

46 On the association of shells with ‘a feminized realm of specificity and diversity’ see Woodall J., “Wtewael’s Perseus and Andromeda: looking for love in seventeenth century Dutch painting”, in Arscott C. – Scott K. (eds.), *Manifestations of Venus. Art and Sexuality*, (Manchester: 2000) 39–68. Quotation is from p. 39; see especially 45–46.

In Francken's handling of it, the Achilles theme heroizes collecting while it also expresses anxieties about the commodification of art. This representation in a *constcamer* picture of inalienable possession operating outside of exchange values indicates the full range of the genre's cultural work. While early seventeenth-century *constcamer* pictures propose the elision of pleasure, knowledge, commerce, and virtue, they also betray some of the strains and fractures at work in this ideal. Francken's artful illusions invite us to see, and see through, the *constcamer* as an invention that promulgates enduring ideals in a world shaped by contingent and fluctuating values.

Returning to Francken's likely visual source, we can more fully appreciate the stakes of his novel treatment of the Achilles theme [Figs. 20.4–20.5]. As in Rubens's picture and its iteration in prints, Achilles's raised sword in the Louvre picture simultaneously secures his heroic identity and wards off Deidameia's now futile love. But pressing the figures tightly behind and beside the table, Francken departs from his source to fill most of the depicted space with the beautifully rendered contents of the *constkamer*, inviting, as noted above, our simultaneous enjoyment of heroic narration and material description. The picture animates multiple forms of desire without insisting on the priority of any one of them: Deidamia's love for Achilles; her sisters' infatuation with beautiful goods; the *liefhebber's* love of art. Its manifold attractions promise that knowledge and self-knowledge, as well as delightful or dangerous deceptions are there to be discovered by the viewer motivated by love.

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- Zell M., "The Gift Among Friends: Rembrandt's Art in the Network of his Patronal and Social Relations", in Chong A. – Zell M. (eds.) *Rethinking Rembrandt* (Zwolle, 2002) 173–193.

Desire by Candlelight: Body and Coin in Gerrit van Honthorst's *Old Woman With Coins*

Natasha Seaman

Gerrit van Honthorst's *Old Woman with Coins* depicts a woman examining a large coin by the light of a lantern [Fig. 21.1]. With her left hand she holds her glasses to her eyes and clutches a money bag; with her right, she holds the coin. Another money bag, spilling more coins, peeps out from the neck of her red jacket. The little that has been written on this painting identifies the subject as an allegorical representation of the vice of Avarice and/or the sense of Sight because of the symbolic suggestion of the coins, the candle, and the glasses.¹ These straightforward identifications seem compatible with the painting itself, which is a half-length composition with very little else visible than the old woman and her simple action of gazing at the coin in her hand.

However, while the painting indeed contains the basic ingredients of the allegorical subject matter of Avarice or Sight, it can also be seen to offer much more. First, the painting does not signify in solitude. Van Honthorst, who lived in Italy from 1616 to 1620, introduced to his home town of Utrecht his variation of the Caravaggesque half-length²: single- and multi-figure paintings featuring musicians, prostitutes, and allegorical figures like this one. The figures are presented in close proximity to the viewer, expressively lit and vividly characterized. Through a controlled variety of character types, props,

* I would like to thank Michael Zell, Walter Melion, and Joanna Woodall for their suggestions on an earlier draft; the other conference participants and audience for their comments during the conference; Anthony Apesos and Nora Crane; and the many helpful members of the CAAH listserv.

1 Judson J.R. – Ekkart R.E.O., *Gerrit van Honthorst* (Doornspijk: 1999), no. 229. The painting is signed with a monogram and a date that is now partially illegible: 162[?]. Judson and Ekkart reasonably date the painting to Van Honthorst's early years in Utrecht, after his return from Italy; its current collection assigns it to 1623. A painting of a similar subject by Paulus Moreelse, also from Utrecht, is signed and dated 1621 (art market). Because of the inclusion of a laughing boy in the scene, it is possible that Moreelse adapted Rubens's painting *Old Woman and Young Boy with a Candle* (ca. 1616–1617; Mauritshuis), but I would argue that he was more likely stimulated by Van Honthorst's composition, as was often the case in Utrecht at this time. This suggests a date of 1621 or before for Van Honthorst's painting.

2 Ibid., 18.



FIGURE 21.1 *Gerrit van Honthorst, Old Woman with Coins (ca. 1623). Oil on canvas, signed and dated upper left, Gv Honthorst fc/162[3?] 75 × 60 cm. THE KREMER COLLECTION, AMSTERDAM.*

and settings, he introduces dynamic connections among the various images. While we know little about how such paintings were collected, it is difficult to imagine this painting as anything but a complement to a larger collection of such images. Second, the painting engages with themes related to the gaze of old women that played out not only in Van Honthorst's oeuvre, but also more broadly in art and literature of Italy and the Low Countries in the early modern period. Most prominently, the theme of old women looking emerges

in scenes of prostitution, in the figure of the Procureess. While Dutch prostitution scenes by Van Honthorst and his Utrecht contemporaries have previously invited comparison to contemporary literature and social conditions,³ to adumbrate the interpretive possibilities of *Old Woman with Coins*, here I place it in the context not only of other works by Van Honthorst, but also of images produced by Dutch artists of the previous generation. The most important of these is Hendrick Goltzius's *Danaë* [Fig. 21.10]. Eric Jan Sluijter sees this work as a witty and learned response, intended for a sophisticated audience, to the disapproving discourse on erotic images in the Netherlands in the sixteenth century.⁴ By focusing on the figure of the old woman in both paintings, this study extends the implications of Sluijter's interpretation, while also opening up the meaning that Van Honthorst's painting might have had to a viewer of similar sophistication as for the *Danaë*. Not only allegorical, the painting can be understood in this context to be in dynamic relationship to more overt scenes of prostitution as well as to the viewer of those scenes.

Visus, Avarice, and the Procureess

Allegories of the senses as well as of the vices were common pictorial subjects during this period, particularly in prints, which, because they are titled in the image, facilitate the identification of the allegory. The old woman's ostentatious gaze, as well as the eye glasses and the candle lantern in Van Honthorst's painting, are all motifs that appear in allegorical prints of Sight, or *Visus*. For instance, a print by Jacob van der Heyden labelled *Visus* includes in its decorative border spectacles at the upper right and a candle lantern at the lower left, among other, more technical devices of vision [Fig. 21.2].⁵ More similar to the Van Honthorst, a *Visus* attributed to Crispijn van de Passe the Elder depicts an old woman looking at a coin by the light of a candle [Fig. 21.3]. Both

3 E.g., Franits W.E., *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting: Its Stylistic and Thematic Evolution* (New Haven: 2004); and Pol L. van de, "The Whore, the Bawd, and the Artist: the Reality and Imagery of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Prostitution", *Journal of the Historians of Netherlandish Art* 2 (2010) DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2010.2.1.3.

4 Sluijter E.J., *Seductress of Sight: Studies in Dutch Art of the Golden Age*, *Studies in Netherlandish Art and Cultural History* 2 (Zwolle: 2000) 368.

5 These include a pillar or shepherd's sundial, a cross staff for navigation, and a surveying device with a compass. Similar objects, as well as eye glasses, can be found in Jan Brueghel's *Allegory of Sight* (1617–1618, Prado), and Goltzius's engraving *Allegory of Sight and Art of Painting* (published 1616). My thanks to Norman Heckenberg of the Physics Museum, University of Queensland, for identifying these items.



FIGURE 21.2 *Jacob van der Heyden, Visus, H. 146 (ca. 1600–1645). Engraving, 17 × 12 cm. British Museum, London.*

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of these prints are part of series illustrating the five senses. Van Honthorst's painting may also have been part of a similar series; his half-length *Old Woman Singing*⁶ could have been a companion representing Hearing.⁷

6 Ca. 1621; Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem.

7 Frans Hals Museum; Taste may be represented in *Old Man Eating Ham*, Musée Calvet, Avignon, though all three paintings vary in dimensions and the *Old Woman with Coins* is the only one that is candlelit.



VISUS
*En Mater VISU fruitur, sed filius ipsas
 1 Res divis Baccho dedicat et Veneri.* Crisp. de Pas inv.
 et excudit.

FIGURE 21.3 *Crispijn van de Passe the Elder; Visus, H. 282 (1576–1650). Engraving, 18.8 × 12.3 cm.*

GRAPH.A1: 19501. HERZOG-AUGUST BIBLIOTHEK, WOLFENBÜTTEL.

There is a compelling case to identify the woman as a personification of Avarice as well. Other than Van de Passe's print, most depictions of *Visus* feature a young beautiful woman examining herself in a mirror.⁸ By contrast, especially in the sixteenth century and after, Avarice is frequently depicted as an old person, and often an old woman; the vice was seen as particularly prevalent in the old, and, as they have less need for the money they hoard, as particularly inexcusable.⁹ Albrecht Dürer's image of *Avarice* provides a pungent example of the aged female Avarice type: an old woman with straggly hair, missing teeth, and large exposed breasts clutches a bag of coins [Fig. 21.4]. In Cesare Ripa's 1613 *Iconologia*, although she is not as old, Avarice is depicted similarly: breasts exposed and clutching a money bag. The text accompanying the illustration explains that her breasts are full of milk but she will not share it with a starving child [Fig. 21.5].¹⁰ While the old woman in Van Honthorst's image does not expose her breasts and her age makes lactation impossible, the location of the money bags next to her bosom literalizes Ripa's simile of hoarded money as withheld maternal nutrition; now the breasts are money bags themselves. That a case can be made for the old woman representing either Sight or Avarice suggests that Van Honthorst sought not so much to differentiate the two, but to elide them. Indeed, in the medieval tradition, Avarice was considered a sin of sight.¹¹

In addition to embodying these concepts, the old woman also looks like a procuress,¹² the old woman in paintings and literary works who brokered transactions between prostitutes and clients.¹³ The procuress was a stock

8 For several more examples of *Visus* with a woman looking in a mirror, see Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight* 87–99.

9 For an outline of the transformation of the subject of Avarice from the medieval period, including its feminization, see Hamon P., "L'avarice en images: mutations d'une représentation", *Seizième Siècle* 4 (2008), esp. 19.

10 Ripa C., *Iconologia* (Siena, Appresso gli Heredi di Matteo Florimi: 1613) 54; and Hamon, *L'avarice en images* 11–34. As such, the vice of Avarice was frequently paired with the virtue of Charity, in which a woman nurses two children. See Yalom M., *A History of the Breast* (New York: 1997) 26.

11 Hamon, *L'avarice en images* 28.

12 Josua Bruyn also identifies the figure type of an old woman with coins as a procuress: "Jung und Alt – Ikonographische Bemerkungen zur Tronie", in Rudiger Klessman (ed.), *Hendrick ter Brugghen und die Nachfolger Caravaggios in Holland: Beiträge eines Symposions aus Anlass der Ausstellung 'Holländische Malerei in neuem Licht, Hendrick ter Brugghen und seine Zeitgenossen' im Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum Braunschweig vom 23. bis 25. März 1987* (Braunschweig: 1987) 71.

13 For the difference between the character of the Procuress in painting and literature and her counterpart in real life, see Pol, "The Whore, the Bawd, and the Artist".



FIGURE 21.4 Albrecht Dürer, *Avarice*. Reverse side of the portrait of a young man (1507). Oil on panel, 35 × 29 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.
 PHOTO CREDIT: ERIC LESSING/ART RESOURCE, NEW YORK.

character in Utrecht prostitution scenes.¹⁴ In some paintings her role is made clear by her pointing to her palm, as in Dirck van Baburen's *Procuress* [Fig.

14 Ibid., 12–13. For an overview, see Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting* 65–84.



FIGURE 21.5 Cesare Ripa, *Avarice*, engraved illustration from *Iconologia* (Siena, Matteo Florimi: 1613) page 54.

21.6]; in others, such as Van Honthorst's *Matchmaker*, she can be identified by being present at a scene of bought love [Fig. 21.7]. Like the old woman in our painting, she is typically turbaned, wrinkled, and missing teeth.

Of course, the old woman need not relinquish her role as an allegory of Avarice in order to take up the turban of the procuress. Sluijter suggests that the procuress figure emerged in art primarily in order to include the moralizing allegory of Avarice in depictions of the Prodigal Son in the tavern, which was the ancestor of later brothel scenes.¹⁵ The inscription on Van de Passe's

15 Sluijter E.J., "Emulating Sensual Beauty: Representations of Danaë from Gossaert to Rembrandt", *Simiolus* 27 (1999) 28–29, n. 110; for more on the transition from Prodigal Son to Merry Company, see Renger K., *Lockere Gesellschaft. Zur Ikonographie des Verlorenen Sohnes und von Wirtshausszenen in der Niederländischen Malerei* (Berlin: 1970).



FIGURE 21.6 *Dirck van Baburen, Procuress (1622). Oil on canvas, 101 × 107 cm. MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON.*

print of *Visus* also alludes to a connection between Avarice and whoring. It reads, 'En Mater VISU fruitur sed filius ipsas/Res divis Baccho dedicat et Veneri' ('Behold! The mother enjoys looking [at the coins], but the son dedicates these things [the coins] to divine Bacchus and Venus').¹⁶ A contemporaneous print by the English engraver George Glover locates Avarice in the brothel as well, tracing the woman's life path from prostitute to procuress [Fig. 21.8]. It depicts the same toothless figure type with turban and glasses and beneath her, the title reads, 'Avaritia. Coveteousnes'. The inscription

16 My thanks to Sean Gilsdorf for this translation.



FIGURE 21.7 *Gerrit van Honthorst, The Procuress (1625). Oil on panel, 71 × 104 cm. Collection Centraal Museum Utrecht/with support of the Vereniging Rembrandt 1951. IMAGE AND COPYRIGHT CENTRAAL MUSEUM, UTRECHT/ERNST MORITZ.*

elaborates: 'A covetous yong Wench t'is rare to see./ For as her body, soe her purse is free,/ But once turnd bawd, (as past it) and growne old,/ Her soule it selse, she Prostitutes to Gould'. A young woman, in other words, gives freely of herself and her gold until she has lost her youthful beauty. Then she becomes a bawd—procuress—and begins to hoard her money.

Danaë, the Old Woman, and Safeguarding Seduction

The prostitution scenes of Van Honthorst and other painters in Utrecht, in their contemporary costume, vivid characterizations, and psychological details, make a strong case for an eye-witness view of contemporary prostitutes. However, the procuress figure that often features in these paintings has deep art historical roots not only in scenes of the Prodigal Son but also depictions of the story of Danaë. The role of the procuress in these depictions, particularly as it was painted by Hendrick Goltzius in his monumental version, provides an important key for understanding Van Honthorst's work.



FIGURE 21.8 George Glover. Avaritia. Coveteousnes (ca. 1630). Engraving, 19.4 × 12.9 cm. British Museum, London.

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A popular subject for artists,¹⁷ the story tells how Jupiter falls in love with the beautiful Danaë, imprisoned by her father to keep her from conceiving the son that was prophesied to kill him. In one of his great metamorphoses, Jupiter breaches her cell and makes love to her as a shower of gold. Thanks to Jupiter's manifestation as gold, the story of Danaë has been glossed since late antiquity as a demonstration of how easily women's virtue may be bought—effectively casting Danaë as a prostitute.¹⁸ In some textual versions of the story, Danaë is accompanied in her solitude by an old nurse. Likely encouraged by a comedy by Ariosto, *I Suppositi* (1509), which features an old nursemaid corrupted by money,¹⁹ the old woman is interpreted by visual artists as a procuress to complement Danaë's role as a prostitute. The old woman/procuress first appears in a depiction of Danaë in a fresco by Francesco Primaticcio in the Galerie of François I at Fontainebleau;²⁰ this composition circulated in an engraving by the Master L.D. (Léon Davent) [Fig. 21.9]. Primaticcio depicts the old nurse covetously embracing an amphora, presumably filled with fallen gold. Titian also includes the procuress figure in his painting for Philip II of Spain.²¹ In it, the old woman grasps openly for her portion of the gold that falls, and a set of keys, a symbol associated with the procuress, hangs at her waist.²²

Goltzius's version of the scene, intended for a wealthy patron with a taste for such imagery,²³ introduces some important variations on the Italian depictions [Fig. 21.10]. In the painting, Danaë sleeps as putti push back curtains to reveal her nude body. Mercury and an old woman stand opposite the viewer on the far side of Danaë's bed, both smiling. Mercury points towards Jupiter, who takes form of an eagle and scatters gold pieces on Danaë, while the old woman collects it in a vessel and reaches out to touch her radiant charge. Close examination of the old woman reveals that one large breast is exposed, linking her unmistakably to representations of Avarice.²⁴

17 Kahr M., "Virtuous, Voluptuous, Venal Woman", *Art Bulletin* 61 (1978) 43–55; Santore C., "The Renaissance Courtesan's Alter Ego", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 54 (1991) 412–427; and Sluijter, "Emulating Sensual Beauty" 4–45.

18 Simons P., *The Sex of Men in Premodern Europe: A Cultural History* (Cambridge, UK – New York: 2011) 171.

19 Santore, "The Renaissance Courtesan's Alter Ego" 418.

20 Kahr, "Virtuous, Voluptuous, Venal Woman" 46.

21 1553–1554, Prado Museum, Madrid.

22 Santore, "The Renaissance Courtesan's Alter Ego" 418.

23 Bartolomeus Ferreris was an art connoisseur and financier. Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight* 153.

24 Sluijter, "Emulating Sensual Beauty" 28–29.



FIGURE 21.9 *Léon Davent (Master L.D.) after Francesco Primaticcio, Danaë (ca. 1542–1547). Etching, 21.6 × 29.6 cm.*

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK.

Sluijter situates Goltzius's painting within the discourse on images in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Netherlandish writing that described nudes as highly seductive and thereby dangerous to the viewer. Just one example of several that Sluijter identifies is a poem by the artist Dirck Coornhert:

Brengt in 't gedacht een schone Venus naakt
 Wat zal 't doch malen dan onkuise brand?
 Blust dezen vonk, eer gij in vlammen raakt!
 Dit vierig beeld wast uit snelder hand,
 Maakt vast verbonden met uw verstand,
 Dat het uw oog van lust afkeert,
 Want lusts aanzien teelt kwa begeert.



FIGURE 21.10 *Hendrick Goltzius, The Sleeping Danaë Being Prepared to Receive Jupiter (1603). Oil on canvas, 173.3 × 200 cm.*
LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART, GIFT OF THE AHMANSON
FOUNDATION (M.84.191).

Imagine a beautiful nude Venus
 What will it churn up in one's mind but an unchaste fire?
 Douse this spark before you go up in flames!
 Swiftly extinguish this fiery image,
 Abide firmly by your reason,
 Such that it turns your eyes away from lust,
 Because the sight of lust breeds evil desire.²⁵

25 Cited and translated in Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight* 121 and n. 109.

Coornhert, with whom Goltzius studied, raises the alarm in this poem about the dangers of nude paintings and advises looking away before 'evil desire' is created in the viewer, the eye being understood as the primary vector of seduction in this period.²⁶

Sluijter argues that Goltzius sought to manage these concerns about the seductive power of images in his paintings in two ways. One was to depict nudes in canonical poses, lending them the authority of tradition and offering a respectable metric for their appreciation.²⁷ Another was to depict erotic scenes with built-in moral consequences. Historical stories such as Susanna and the Elders or Diana and Actaeon, for instance, included within the narrative a punishment for looking with desire, while allegorical scenes such as Goltzius's *Sight* present symbols of evil and vice within the image to provide an internal moral brake [Fig. 21.11].²⁸ The cat on the left, for instance, alludes to base desire²⁹ and the woman looks into a mirror, which not only offers a host of meanings related to sight and mimesis, but also refers to the vices of Vanity and Pride.³⁰

Whereas Sluijter sees the old woman in the Danaë only as a reminder of transience and as a foil to Danaë's beauty,³¹ I argue that her presence also contributes to managing the eroticism of the image. She demonstrates an excessive response to the scene, both in economic and physical desire. Her desire for gold induces her to allow Jupiter's seduction, and her touch of Danaë's body, while it can be read as a gesture of awakening her, suggests her own desire for her body as well. This characterization can also be traced to the Italian literary type, cognate with the procuress and the corruptible nursemaid, of the ugly old guardian, who was seen not only as an obstruction to the young male lover in his attempt to woo his beloved, but also a jealous competitor who co-opts the male gaze.³²

The procuress figure in Primaticcio's *Danaë* also demonstrates this quality of sexual envy and desire [Fig. 21.12]. Primaticcio depicts Danaë lying on a bed parallel to the picture plane, supported on pillows; her right leg, closer to the

26 Ibid., 112.

27 Ibid., 157.

28 Ibid., 123.

29 Ibid., 124–125.

30 Ibid., 112.

31 For the old woman generally as a foil, see *ibid.*, 82.; for specifically in the Danaë, see Sluijter, "Emulating Sensual Beauty" 28.

32 Bettella P., *The Ugly Woman: Transgressive Aesthetic Models in Italian Poetry from the Middle Ages to the Baroque* (Toronto – Buffalo: 2005) 45–51.



FIGURE 21.11 Jan Saenredam after Hendrick Goltzius, *Sight* (ca. 1595). Engraving, 17.3 × 12.3 cm.
COURTESY NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, D.C.



FIGURE 21.12 *Gerrit van Honthorst, Soldier and Girl (ca. 1621). Oil on canvas, 82.6 × 66 cm. HERZOG-ANTON-ULRICH MUSEUM, BRAUNSCHWEIG.*

viewer, is bent at the knee. Her left leg is also bent, but rotated at the hip so that it is splayed on the bed, the sole of her left foot presented to the viewer. The old woman lies nearly perpendicular to Danaë, her foot and ankle suggestively penetrating the triangle, draped in folds of cloth, created by the bend of the young woman's left knee. The old woman's toes point directly towards Danaë's

puḍenda. Her torso, however, is twisted away from Danaë as she covetously grasps the amphora. The amphora is not only a vessel for gathered coins, but also a metaphor for Danaë's body—now too a container for Jupiter's gold.³³

In her survey of images of Danaë, Madelyn Kahr argues that Titian's introduction of the procuress into the scene solves a fundamental problem for the viewer: that Danaë's acceptance of the gold from Jupiter stimulates considerations of female cupidity and thus distracts from the viewer's rapture at her beauty. By including the procuress actively reaching for Jupiter's money, the painter allows her to absorb the avaricious, commercial aspect of the story, leaving Danaë to lounge passively in nude splendour. Danaë's beauty and sexual availability remain untainted by acquisitiveness.³⁴

The procuress in Goltzius' *Danaë* may be seen as serving a similar role as that in the Titian, but three distinct features of the painting evoke further meanings. These are the portrayal of Danaë asleep, the inclusion of Mercury, and the procuress touching Danaë's body—all unique in the history of the scene. Through her sleeping form, Danaë symbolizes the unresponsive, inert painting.³⁵ As Sluijter argues, a riddle in a poem by the Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel on paintings of Danaë clarifies this status: 'Wat sluit geen gouden sleutel open! / De snoeplust vreest geen scherpe wacht / ... Maer vindt er niets dan verf en doeck' ('What can a gold key not unlock! / The philanderer fears not the vigilant guard / ... / But finds nothing but paint and canvas'.)³⁶ The 'gold key' here refers to the money that disarms the guard, but once the viewer has gained the company of Danaë, further advances are thwarted by her existence only as a painting.

Sluijter rests his case here, concluding that because of the smiles on everyone's face but Danaë's, Goltzius intended his painting to be humorous.³⁷ While the joke is clearly present, the roles of Mercury and the procuress / Avarice, when examined further, can be seen to deepen the significance of the sleeping Danaë. Standing next to and behind the old woman, Mercury points up towards Jupiter, making his explosive entry. Mercury, the trickster god of

33 The connection between vases and female bodies was a current one in Italy; see Cropper, E., "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, *Petrarchismo* and the Vernacular Style", *Art Bulletin* 58 (1976) 374–394.

34 Kahr, "Virtuous, Voluptuous, Venal Woman" 49–50. Goltzius includes in the right foreground of the painting a chest, emblazoned with his signature, that overflows with money. This seems designed to circumvent the possible interpretation of the artist himself as a procuress.

35 Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight* 153.

36 Quoted and translated in *ibid.* See also 319, n. 200.

37 *Ibid.*, 153.

painters and commerce,³⁸ extends his arm into the depth of the painting and thus indicates its eye-tricking, virtual space. The old woman's arm, on the same axis, reaches forward to touch Danaë, indexing the painting itself, embodied by the sleeping girl, and thus the picture plane—the skin of the painting that constitutes the image's material register. In her touch, she not only breaches her boundaries as a guardian, but also differentiates herself from the viewer, who, like Jupiter, is gazing without touching and instead obtaining satisfaction only through sight and his shower of gold—his purchase. The phallic shape of the money bag held aloft by putti suggests the extent of his enthusiasm for the transaction.³⁹

The idea of touching a nude as a breach of artful decorum related to lack of sophistication and uncontrolled desires can also be perceived in a drawing by Werner van den Valckert.⁴⁰ In it, a nude woman carrying a palette and brushes attempts to fend off the attack of a horned satyr. The caption reads, 'Cunst heeft haters' ('Art has haters'). The 'hater' here, rather than turning away from the nude embodiment of Art that he despises, or admiring it visually and with appropriate restraint, instead embraces it lustily, both contradicting his hatred and suggesting his utter lack of control at her sight.⁴¹ The old woman thus not only displaces Danaë's acquisitiveness (even less present here, too, because she is asleep) but also exceeds through her greed and desire any such feeling by the viewer.

Old Woman with Coins among the Prostitutes

If the figure of Avarice in Goltzius's picture provides an internal brake to a highly seductive painting, perhaps Van Honthorst's old woman serves a similar role, only from outside the painting. From the perspective of Coornhert and other writers on the seductiveness of images, it would have been highly necessary. Van Honthorst, like his fellow Utrecht painters Van Baburen and Ter Brugghen, eschewed erotic history subjects such as Susanna and the Elders, Danaë, Bathsheba, or Diana, and, inspired by the format as well as the frankness of Caravaggio's naturalism, instead painted seductive half-length genre scenes. Van Honthorst's paintings also dispense with any internal checks on

38 Mander Karel van, *Wtlegghingh op den Metamorphosis Pub. Ouidij Nasonis* (Haarlem, Paschier van Westbusch: 1604), fol. 127r.

39 Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight* 152.

40 1618, Staatlichen Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin.

41 For a slightly different interpretation of the drawing, see Sluijter, *Seductress of Sight* 154.

the image's erotic charge. For instance, in the half-length *Soldier and a Girl*, he depicts a young woman blowing upon a burning coal in order to light a candle [Fig. 21.12]. She is wearing only a chemise, open at the collar. A man stands behind her, gazing into her face and grasping her breast. The incendiary contact between the candle and the coal in the woman's hand is matched by the arousing contact between the man's hand and her breast. Although the painting invokes the authority of iconographic tradition—Pliny celebrated the painter Antiphilus's image of a boy blowing on a coal and the motif had been revived in Italy in the sixteenth century⁴²—it seems, if not directly to challenge Coornhert's concerns about the dangers of the 'unchaste fire' and a 'fiery image', then at least to operate in blithe indifference to such reservations.

In a further challenge, *Soldier and a Girl* also seems specifically to evoke Goltzius's 1595 *Sight* [Fig. 21.11]. As in that engraving, a man gazes into a woman's averted face and touches her breast. No warnings to the viewer are visible in Van Honthorst's *Soldier and Girl*, however: there is no cat, the man's tentative touch has become a lustful palming of her breast, and the woman turns not to a mirror, but to blow upon the coal—in other words, further to inflame with desire. Compared to the Goltzius images, it is a no-holds-barred seduction of the viewer.

Similarly, in Van Honthorst's *Courtesan Holding an Obscene Image*, a scantily clad young woman smiles at the viewer, pointing at a small oval painting in her hand [Fig. 21.13]. The figure in the painting within the painting is nude, sitting with her back to the viewer. Beneath the nude is an inscription, 'Wie kent mijn naers/ van afteren,' or 'Who can tell my backside/ from behind'. The image within the image possibly suggests the practice of selecting prostitutes based on their portraits at brothels,⁴³ but it also allows Van Honthorst to depict both front and back of the young woman's voluptuous body. The painting openly invites the viewer's gaze, first by the woman's laughing eye contact, next by her gesture of pointing at the smaller image, and then, in the oval painting within the painting, by the glance of the woman as she peeps through her fingers.

42 For extensive discussion, see Borchhardt-Birbaumer B., *Imago Noctis: die Nacht in der Kunst des Abendlandes: Vom Alten Orient bis ins Zeitalter des Barock* (Vienna: 2003).

43 Pol L. van de, *The Burgher and the Whore: Prostitution in Early Modern Amsterdam*, trans. I. Waters (Oxford: 2011); and Kolfin E., "Potretten van Liefde en Lust: Portretten en Potretteren in Illustraties uit Noord- en Zuidnederlandse Boekjes over Liefde ca. 1600–1635", *De seventiende eeuw* 17 (2001) 121–137.



FIGURE 21.13 *Gerrit van Honthorst, Smiling Girl, a Courtesan, Holding an Obscene Image* (1625). Oil on canvas, 81 × 64 cm.
ST. LOUIS ART MUSEUM, FRIENDS FUND 63:1954.

Finally, in order to read the inscription in the smaller painting, the viewer must approach the image, coming in close proximity with the courtesan's bosom.⁴⁴

44 Schiller N., "Desire and Dissimulation: Laughter as an Expressive Behavior in Karel van Mander's *Den Grondt der Edel Vry Schilderconst* (1604)", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 60 (2010) 93.

In presenting a half-length, artificially-lit figure involved in the business of prostitution, Van Honthorst's *Old Woman with Coins* relates to these images, but offers a very different viewing experience. The woman's awkward pose and her wrinkled skin do not invite a desirous gaze. In contrast to the pearly smiles of the young women in the *Matchmaker* or the *Courtesan*, her slightly open lips offer a view into a toothless mouth. She neither draws our eyes to a more desirable younger woman nor piques our jealousy by standing close to an object of desire; rather, with eyes nearly concealed by glasses, she is fully engrossed in the object she studies, which unlike the oval panel held by the courtesan in the St. Louis painting, only reveals to us its darkened reverse.

The Gaze at the Coin

In gazing at the coin, the woman behaves differently from other painted female manifestations of Avarice. The old woman in Goltzius's *Danaë*, for instance, smiles and touches the woman. In Dürer's *Avarice*, she looks at the viewer. The motif of inspecting a coin is more like depictions of male figures with money, such as on the exterior wings of Jan Provoost's *Triptych with Death and the Miser*,⁴⁵ or the moneylender in Quentin Matsys's *Moneylender and his Wife*.⁴⁶

In order to be determine their value, coins in this period required inspection. In her discussion of the *Moneylender and His Wife*, Joanna Woodall surveys the complications of the monetary systems in the sixteenth century, which still held true for the seventeenth. Coins were not assigned values that were stamped into their surfaces as they are today; a variety of currencies in different metals circulated in any given location, often beyond the borders of where they had been minted; coins could be clipped by other users, to extract small quantities of metal; or reissued in the identical form but with different degrees of purity. Further complicating matters, the value of gold and silver fluctuated according to supply and demand.⁴⁷

The old woman might thus be understood as scrutinizing her coin in order to discern its value. However, this activity would be better accomplished with the help of a balance, like the one used by Matsys's moneylender, and she has no such tool. Her rapt gaze also evokes an act of connoisseurship, but again, she lacks key signals of this activity. Connoisseurship suggests discernment

45 1525; Collection Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

46 1525, Musée du Louvre, Paris. For an excellent overview of the problems, variety, and valuation of coins in this period, see Woodall J., "De Wisselaer: Quentin Matsys's *Man Weighing Gold Coins and His Wife*, 1514", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 64 (2014) 38–75.

47 *Ibid.*, 50.

and differentiation, as in the case of the moneylender, whose desk also displays various collectibles—the fine illuminated manuscript read by his wife, a crystal chalice, and an antique coin.⁴⁸ Similarly, the old woman can be contrasted with the allegorical figure representing Sight in the Flemish multi-artist painting *Sense of Sight and Smell*.⁴⁹ While the figure representing Sight gazes at her reflection in a mirror and is surrounded by technical tools, as in the prints depicting *Visus* discussed above, she holds a collection of ancient coins that are organized on cards by size and material. By contrast, the coins around the old woman are unsorted and undifferentiated—her actions indicate that she is not a collector but a hoarder, concerned only with volume. As Phillipe Hamon notes in his survey of images of Avarice, what interests the avaricious in the examination and evaluation of coins is the pleasure of visual and sensorial contact with their material substance.⁵⁰ This is further suggested in the intimate positioning of the money bag in the woman's jacket.

It is also possible to see that her possessive gaze and desire for the coins extends beyond their metallic materiality to what the coins symbolize in this context. Like all money, as well as being itself, a coin stands in the place of something else, an understanding that was already current by this time.⁵¹ As the late-medieval French philosopher Nichole Oresme (1320/25–1382) wrote, 'quoniam per pecuniam non immediate succurritur indigencie uite, sed est instrumentum artificialiter adinuentum pro naturalibus diuiciis leuius permu-tandis'—'money does not directly relieve the necessities of life, but is an instrument artificially invented for the easier exchange of natural riches'.⁵² Given the old woman's connection to prostitution, the money can be seen to stand proxy for a body. Like in Goltzius's *Danaë*, this body could naturally be seen as that of the younger prostitute, the old woman's gaze suggesting the possessive, possessing one of the jealous nursemaid. Showing his familiarity with this trope in a drawing now in Leipzig, Van Honthorst depicts a procuress looking at the sleeping nude form of a beautiful young woman by the light of a candle,

48 For identification of these items and a related discussion, see *ibid.*, esp. 47–49.

49 The hands of Jan Brueghel the Elder, Frans Francken II, Hendrik van Balen, and Jan Brueghel the Younger have all been identified, but others are likely; ca. 1618–23, Prado, Madrid. For literature, see Loughman T. – Morris K. – Yaeger-Crasselt L (eds.), *Splendor, Myth, and Vision: Nudes from the Prado* [exh. cat., the Clark Art Institute, Williamstown] (New Haven: 2016).

50 Hamon, *L'Avarice en images* 28.

51 Shell M., *Art and Money* (Chicago – London: 1995) 407.

52 Oresme N., *De Moneta*, in *De Moneta of Nichole Oresme and English Mint Documents*, trans. C. Johnson (Auburn, AL: 2009) 4–5.



FIGURE 21.14 *Gerrit van Honthorst, An Old Woman Illuminating a Young Girl with a Candle* (ca. 1621). Pen, grey wash, and white chalk on grey brown paper, 17 × 20 cm. Museum der Bildenden Kunst, Leipzig, Germany.

PHOTO CREDIT: BERTRAM KOBER/ART RESOURCE, NEW YORK.

its form suggesting a phallic desire [Fig. 21.14].⁵³ In Van Baburen's *Procuress*, the old woman's line of vision includes the coin in the man's hand and, just behind it, the prostitute's breasts, combining the two objects of the old woman's desire. Jacob Backer's painting of a prostitute visualizes the practice in the

53 Judson and Ekkart note that the pose of the young woman alludes to Caravaggio's *Mary Magdalene in Ecstasy* (known in several copies), Judson – Ekkart, *Gerrit van Honthorst* 343. The Magalene's status as a former prostitute may add to the viewer's understanding of the young woman as one, especially as here her open mouthed pose has been comically reconfigured from religious ecstasy to snoring.



FIGURE 21.15 *Jacob Backer, Half Naked Woman with a Coin (ca. 1636). Oil on canvas, 64.5 × 56.7 cm. Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, Portugal.*

PHOTO CREDIT: ALBUM/ART RESOURCE, NY.

Netherlands of women baring their chests to signal their status as prostitutes as well as creating an equivalence between coin and breast [Fig. 21.15].⁵⁴

We could also see, given the suggestion in the tradition that the procuress is a prostitute grown old, that this coin serves as a synecdoche for all those that have been exchanged for *her* body—her sum total. A “Ballade” by the fif-

54 Pol, *The Burgher and the Whore* 181, n. 75.

teenth-century French poet François Villon also suggests this. A woman past her prime addresses her juniors, encouraging them to profit from their beauty. The first stanza is typical:

Or y pensez, belle gantiere,
 Qui escolliere souliez estre,
 Et vous, Blanche la savetiere,
 Ores est temps de vous congnoistre!
 Prenez a destre et a senestre,
 N'espargniez homme, je vous prie,
 Car vieilles n'ont ne cours ne estre,
 Ne que monnoye qu'on descrye.

So think about it, pretty glove-seller,
 You're not a school girl anymore;
 And you, Blanche, the cobbler girl,
 It's time you get to know the score:
 Get what you can now, left and right,
 And spare no man, I tell you,
 For old ladies have no worth or purpose,
 Like coins pulled from circulation.⁵⁵

Like this one, each stanza ends with the refrain, 'Ne que monnoye qu'on descrie'.

Like the verse on George Glover's print, the poem creates an equivalence between the woman's body and money, value draining away with her youth and beauty as she ages, a result underlined in Villon's poem by the coin being pulled from circulation, a complete devaluation.

In a sense, then, in looking at the coin, the old woman is looking at herself. Here it is relevant that the allegory of Avarice is closely linked to sight, and that the allegory of Sight was so frequently rendered as a woman looking in a mirror. Indeed, if we survey other images that show women looking at an object as intently as the old woman does, the only object that receives such attention is a mirror.⁵⁶ This can be discerned in images of *Visus*, including the ones illustrated above, and also in Hans Memling's *Vanitas*, Giovanni Bellini's *Woman*

55 François Villon, *Poems*, trans. D. Georgi (Evanston: 2012) 63, lines 533–540.

56 The only exception to this is the Bible, an image type clearly operating on a different register of meaning.

with a Mirror, and Jan Gossaert's *Venus with Mirror*.⁵⁷ The mirroring between the old woman and the coin in the Van Honthorst is also suggested in Cesare Ripa's images of Avarice. Despite other variations, in both the 1613 and 1618 illustrated editions, a woman gazes at her money bag, whose ties and wrinkled appearance resemble her unkempt hair and worn face.

The distinctly slender, ropey appearance of the ties and her hair also suggests snakes [Figs. 21.5 & 21.16]. While old women with snakes—as hair, in the hand, or in the mouth—is also a characteristic of the allegory of Envy,⁵⁸ a sin with natural affiliations with Avarice, the mirroring implied between the woman's head and the money bag opens connections to the myth of Medusa. According to Ovid, Medusa was once a beautiful girl who was made ugly by Athena after having been raped by Poseidon in the goddess' temple. She had snakes for hair, and her ugliness could turn men to stone, a petrification she herself suffered when Perseus—Danaë's son—reflected her face back to her on his shield.⁵⁹ As the trajectory of a procuress's life follows in broad strokes that of Medusa—beautiful, then sexual, then ugly—so too, as depicted by Van Honthorst, the procuress evokes the action of gazing in a petrifying mirror. Her appearance reinforces this effect. The arrangement of her turban makes her head look round, and the way that the white cloth around her face catches the light is similar to the coin's illuminated border. The golden tint of her skin in the candlelight mimics that of the coin. Her round glasses echo both her head and the coin. The coins that spill out of her blouse and the similarity of the money bag hanging near her face to her leathery skin offer the suggestion that she is somehow constituted of them. By immobilizing her in self-reflective gazing at the coin, the mature woman's power—to stand between the man and the desirable woman, to co-opt the male gaze—is thus neutralized. In this way, the procuress, no longer the importuning gatekeeper, allows the viewer unrestricted access to her charges.

Through these nuances, Van Honthorst expresses visual themes that extend far beyond conventional moralizing. Eddy de Jongh has linked this picture to an emblem engraved by Cornelis Bloemaert after a painting by Hendrick

57 Hans Memling, *Vanitas*, 1490, Musée des Beaux Arts de Strasbourg; Giovanni Bellini, *Woman with a Mirror*, ca. 1515, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; Jan Gossaert, *Venus with Mirror*, ca. 1521, Pinacoteca dell'Accademia dei Concordio, Rovigo; Figure 5.1, this volume.

58 This allegorical type can be seen in an engraving after Jacques de Gheyn II by Zacharias Dolendo, *Invidia (Envy)*, 1596–1597, British Museum, London.

59 *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum (San Diego, New York, London: 1993) book IV, Latin lines 778–798, 141–142.



FIGURE 21.16 Cesare Ripa, *Avarice*, engraved illustration from *Iconologia* (Padua: Pietro Paolo Tozzi, 1618), page 41.

Bloemaert from around 1625 [Fig. 21.17].⁶⁰ It depicts an owl wearing glasses, sitting on a closed book, illuminated by a candle placed on an open Bible. There the commandments against murder and theft are visible. The inscription reads, 'wat baet keers of bril, als den wL niet sien en wil'—'what good are a candle and glasses if the owl simply refuses to see'? The answer is written on a slip of paper tucked into the book to which the owl clings: 'T'is omt profyt'—'it is about profit'.⁶¹ The placement of the candle on the Bible in the print makes it a clear symbol of the light of faith, which the owl ignores. While the old woman's motivations are also generally 'about profit', in contrast to the

60 Jongh E. de – Luijten G., *Mirror of Everyday Life: Genreprints in the Netherlands, 1550–1700*, trans. M. Hoyle [exh. cat., Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam] (Ghent: 1997) 194.

61 Roethlisberger M.G. – Bok M.J., *Abraham Bloemaert and His Sons. Paintings and Prints*, 2 vols, trans. D.L. Webb (Doornspijk: 1993) 1, 444.



FIGURE 21.17 *Cornelis Bloemaert after Hendrick Bloemaert, What Good Are a Candle and Glasses if the Owl Simply Refuses to See? (ca. 1625). Engraving, 22.2 × 18.4 cm. British Museum, London.*

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unfocused gaze of the owl, she looks pointedly through her glasses, and the candle, rather than providing the light of faith, serves to illuminate the coin for her, enabling her sinful gazing. The glasses, while signifying folly and blindness to wisdom, nonetheless magnify her gaze.

It is relevant here that fire, in embers or flames, are a repeated motif in Otto van Veen's *Amorum emblematum*, a collection of emblems dealing with all varieties of profane love.⁶² The emblems take advantage of the natural illumination, heat, contagion, and speed of fire to signify various aspects of love, and, as a repeated motif, the fire creates connections among the different emblems. Similarly, the candle in the *Old Woman with Coins* provides a thematic link to, and thus an interpretive device for the related, fire-lit images by Van Honthorst, such as *The Matchmaker* or the *Soldier with the Woman Blowing on a Coal*. In the latter, the coal glows under the breath and gaze of the woman, illuminating both faces, and passing its flame to the candle in a metaphor of arousal and generation. While the old woman's candle on one hand resembles these examples, evoking an intimate encounter between lovers that is appropriate to her desirous handling of coins, it also, by dint of being contained in the lantern, suggests the sterility of hoarding.

Desire of a Painting

Unlike the prostitutes to which she is linked, the old woman, as noted above, does not seduce. The relationship of the painting to more anecdotal scenes of prostitution resembles that of a devotional subject extracted from a religious narrative. Like Van Honthorst's *Penitent Mary Magdalene*,⁶³ in tearful prayer by lamplight, the *Old Woman with Coins* offers a sense of withdrawal into privacy, into a space of meditation, an effect enhanced by the focused light of the candle. Like a devotional extract, the painting would not blossom into its full meaning without association with a broader context—where for the Magdalene, this was Christ's Passion; for the old woman it is the world of prostitution evoked by such images as his *Soldier and the Girl* or *Matchmaker*. The continued strong presence of Catholic devotions in Utrecht in particular

62 Fire or flames occur in 16 of the 124 emblems in Otto van Veen, *Amorum Emblematum* (Antwerp, Hieronymum Verdussen: 1608).

63 1625, Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

might have prepared the viewer for understanding such a relationship among the images.⁶⁴

In this implicit connection to other paintings, the effect of the *Old Woman with a Coin* resembles the dynamic of confirmed pendant pairs painted by Van Honthorst: for instance, pendants that depict a woman playing a lute in one panel and a man playing a violin in the other, the candle in his panel illuminating her face.⁶⁵ The candle, which itself suggests desire and sexual arousal,⁶⁶ thus obliges the paintings to be displayed together in close enough physical proximity for the effect to register. However, in this reading the *Old Woman with Coins* is not like a pendant; in that it alludes not just to one companion piece, but rather can accompany many. In this way, the painting can be seen to stage its own desire—only through association with others of its kind does it fulfil its function and meaning. As the inscription on a print of *Avarice* by Cornelis Bloemaert after a painting by Van Honthorst reads, ‘Dextera avaritiae semper egena maget’—‘the right hand of Avarice always holds the desire for more.’⁶⁷ Moreover, as an image of an old woman, the picture bears a message of the inevitability of death. This connects it to *Vanitas* images that appear on the reverse of portraits or as portrait covers, such as Giorgione’s painting known as *La Vecchia*.⁶⁸ In fact, Dürer’s *Avarice* serves this purpose on the back of a portrait of an unidentified man. Without a particular portrait linked to it, Van Honthorst’s *Old Woman with the Coin* becomes a free-floating reverse, the back of every painting of a beautiful prostitute. She is the other side of the coin.

The old woman’s gaze remains locked on the coin, which gives license to the viewer not only to judge her for her Avarice, but, if displayed among other scenes of prostitution, also gives free access—both morally and visually—to the women from whom she might otherwise restrict him. Moreover, her excessive viewing, her absorbed engagement with the coin and with the physical

64 For an overview, see Spicer, J. “An Introduction to Painting in Utrecht, 1600–1650” in Spicer J. – Orr F. – Bok. M.J., (eds.), *Masters of Light: Dutch Painters in Utrecht during the Golden Age* [exh. cat., Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Francisco] (New Haven: 1997) 17–24.

65 Workshop of Van Honthorst, Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste.

66 Neumeister M., *Das Nachtstück mit Kunstlicht in der Niederländischen Malerei und Graphik des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts: Ikonographische und Koloristische Aspekte* (Petersberg: 2003) 180.

67 Translated in Jongh – Luijten *Mirror of Everyday Life* 193. The engraving depicts an old woman blocking the light of a candle with an empty purse, making eye contact with the viewer. The Van Honthorst painting is now lost. See Judson – Ekkart, *Gerrit van Honthorst* 128, no. 228.

68 ca. 1507; Accademia, Venice. For more examples, see Cranston J., *Poetics of Portraiture in the Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge: 2000) 56–59.

body that it symbolizes, provides a high water mark for the desiring viewer, setting a threshold which, perhaps to his relief, he could not possibly meet. Her avaricious, hoarding indiscriminacy about her coins also would provide a counterpoint to his discerning collection. Van Honthorst thus adapts the Avarice/procuress type that previously was used to apply internal brakes to erotic images; his figure instead enables unfettered access to the inflammatory eros of his paintings. Like a procuress herself, whose livelihood would disappear without the women that she purveys, the meaning of this image would be incomplete without the scenes of prostitution it calls to mind and, in this sense, imaginatively bodies forth. And, to a connoisseur of such scenes, perhaps, no collection would be complete without her.

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